

The Things We Left Unsaid (I'll Say Them if You Will)

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The Things We Left Unsaid (I'll Say Them if You Will)

by [authorialintent](#)

Summary

It's been two years since the Dream Team broke up. But for Dream's 50 million subscriber special, he asks Sapnap and George to collab one more time.

Maybe it's time for them to say everything they never had the chance to.

Notes

"If you walk into a room and notice what is missing from it, it's still there, isn't it?" --
Caitlyn Siehl

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

I Miss You

Chapter Summary

"It's not just that, George. I miss you." George could feel the way Sapnap was staring at him at these words.

"I'm right here," he says.

"That's not what I mean," Sapnap says. "I miss you."

It is 2:52 AM when George gets the text. The light from his phone screen illuminates his face as he squints, half asleep. He reads the message, then rereads it, then rereads it again -- *come adventure with me*. He contemplates going back to bed; it's Sunday, he has work tomorrow. His phone dings again. George sits up, placing the phone face down on the mattress. He doesn't know if he will respond, but he does know that he won't be able to go back to sleep.

The streets are quiet at this hour. There's nothing that's worth being awake for, he thinks, staring at his wall. The streetlights outside shine slightly through the gaps in the blinds, allowing him to see the crayon scribbles on the wall. The fan on the floor hums loudly -- it's old. He had claimed it from a garage sale. He reaches over and shuts it off. The fan slows to a stop. The fan blades are painted blue with white, cartoonish clouds.

His phone dings again.

George stares at the phone. It would be so easy to ignore it. To shut it off and just sit on his mattress, staring at nothing until it is time to go to work. He picks his phone up and opens his messages.

*come adventure with me
i'll pick you up
please*

It would be so easy to ignore this -- to pretend he never read the texts. *But it's not easy*, he thinks, *not in the way it should be*. George sends a response. He'll be here soon. He pulls on his old, neon green hoodie, and waits.

The fluorescent lights in the convenience store flickered every so often, and the hum of the refrigerators was only slightly quieter than the music playing. George walked along the familiar aisles to the back, where the coffee machine was. He grabbed the largest cup available and filled it to the brim. Right before he put a lid on, he closed his eyes and inhaled deeply -- the smell of coffee was comforting.

His eyes wander to the convex mirror in the corner. Sapnap stood behind him. "What are you staring at, Sapnap?" Sapnap rolls his eyes and grins.

"Still as cheeky as ever, huh?" he responds lightheartedly, "I was just wondering who would let their child wander out alone this late at night."

"I'm older than you, asshole."

"But you're shorter." George lightly shoves him at this, turning away. Sapnap follows him to the counter.

"You take your coffee black?" he asks. George nods. "I remember you used to hate coffee -- the only way that you could drink it is if we put a shit ton of caramel syrup in it."

"Things change, I guess." He grabs a package of cereal from a nearby shelf - Cinnamon Toast Crunch - and puts it on the counter. After a bit of hesitation, he also grabs a packet of Raisinettes.

The register dings. He hands over a \$10 bill and waves his hand at the cashier to keep the change.

"Hold this for me, would you?" He hands Sapnap the coffee. He stuffs the candy in his pocket and opens the cereal as they walk out.

They climb into the back of his truck. Sapnap goes first -- he throws his backpack in and places the coffee down. Using one hand to steady himself, he jumps into the truck in one fluid motion. He turns and offers his hand. George takes it, taking care not to spill the cereal as he climbs in. They settle in -- Sapnap leans against the window, placing his backpack between his knees. George sits with his legs crossed, scrunching his sleeves up to his elbows. He places the cereal between them as an unspoken invitation to share.

"How have you been?" he asks. George plays with the lighter on his keychain, scratching the plastic design off with his fingernail.

"Same as always," he responds. He moves from the lighter to fiddle with the keyring. He takes some cereal, spilling some cinnamon sugar on his jeans. "I don't really like that question."

"Do you not want to talk tonight?" Sapnap presses.

"Not about that."

"Then what about?"

"Let's talk about colors."

"Aren't you colorblind?"

"You don't need to be able to distinguish them to talk about them, you know". There's a beat.

"You know how, when it's really dark in your room, but you can't see anything?" Sapnap nods.

"Once your eyes adjust, you can still see everything, it's just dark. You can still make out all of the furniture in the room - just not the color." George once again grabs the lighter, flicking it, creating a small flame.

"Color is purely defined by wavelengths and what's absorbed by a certain material and what isn't," he continues, "without light, there's no color. So at night, when everything's dark, it's not that you can't see the color, it's that without the light, the color stops existing." He releases the lighter and the flame dies. They sit there for a while, in weighted silence.

Sapnap chuckles after a bit, shifting his legs to open his backpack. "Forgot how much of a nerd you are." George rolls his eyes, but grins.

"Hey, pass me that lighter?" George obliges. Sapnap pulls out a joint from the side pocket of his

backpack. He lights it and takes a long drag, passing it to him. He looks up and breathes out, watching the smoke curl in the air. "I want to talk about Dream."

George stiffens. For a moment, he's thankful, thankful that he was blunt and to the point. Sapnap's always been honest -- to a fault, sometimes.

"Did you get his text?" Sapnap asks. George takes a long drag from the joint, passing it back. When he exhales, he tries not to cough. He nods.

"I haven't opened it yet," he says. "He wants to record a video with us, right?"

"Yeah, something like that," Sapnap responds, "reacting to our old videos and maybe some compilations. For a 50 million subscriber special."

"50 million already?" George says. Sapnap nods. "He's still speedrunning Youtube, huh."

"Well, it's slowed down a bit. But he's still as cocky as ever. I think it would be kind of fun," Sapnap says.

"Did you answer him?" George questions.

"I said I'd only do it if you did it as well," he says, carefully. George pointedly avoids his gaze. "It's not the same if it's only two of us."

"Milking the Dream Team nostalgia," George says. "The stans would love that." Sapnap shrugs, taking another hit from the joint.

"It's not just that, George. I miss you." George could feel the way Sapnap was staring at him at these words.

"I'm right here," he says.

"That's not what I mean," Sapnap says. "I *miss* you."

George reaches over and takes the joint from Sapnap's hand. Sapnap watches him. His cheeks are slightly pink -- it's a bit cold out. George inhales with his eyes closed, holding the smoke until it burns a little bit. There are bags under his eyes, but as he exhales and the smoke curls around him, Sapnap can only think about how *young* he looks. Too young to look that exhausted.

His train of thought is interrupted when George coughs, slightly, passing him the joint. Sapnap takes it from him, but watches as George leans back, staring straight up, watching the moths float around the streetlight. Sapnap sighs, and takes a shallow hit.

"George," he says.

"Sapnap," George says in response, not turning towards him. They sit in silence for a while.

"You know, it would be easier if I never heard from him again," George says, suddenly. His chest feels heavy, and he can't bring himself to look at Sapnap. "Or maybe if he acted like nothing ever happened." Sapnap watches as George moves his hands to the edge of his hoodie, gripping the excess fabric. He doesn't respond, instead choosing to let George speak.

"He still sends me texts on my birthday. And for Christmas. And for Thanksgiving, I still get a long letter." George inhales, shakily. "I never know what to say back. Sometimes he calls instead of texting, and we talk for a little, and it's like nothing ever changed. But it doesn't feel right."

"How does it feel then?"

"Hollow," George says. He sounds breathless at this point. "Fake, maybe." His lungs feel tight. "I don't know." His heart pounds in his ears. For a moment, he feels lightheaded, and some part of him is thankful.

Sapnap watches him. "You're shaking."

"How do you know that?"

"I can feel it from over here, dumbass. You're making the floor shake." George chokes out something like a laugh. Sapnap has never been one for eloquence. He reaches his hand out, and Sapnap hands him the joint. He takes it, hand trembling.

"Mind if I finish it?"

"Be my guest," Sapnap says, "I have more if you want."

George closes his eyes as he inhales, letting the smoke sit in his lungs until it hurts, and exhales, coughing. When he catches his breath, he tries again. There's something cathartic about smoking, he thinks, the way you have to focus on how you breathe. The way it forces you to control your breath. Sapnap watches as George inhales again, and flicks the finished joint over the side of the truck.

"How did we get here Sapnap?" George asks. He means here, in Florida. He means here, after two years of barely talking. He means here, in the back of Sapnap's truck in some random parking lot. He means here, without Dream.

Sapnap laughs, but it is hollow. "We sat here, idiot." George rolls his eyes and grabs his coffee, taking a long sip. It's hot, but not so hot that he burns his throat. He feels the warmth pool in his stomach. Sapnap runs his hand through his hair, seemingly contemplating something.

"George," Sapnap starts, "why did you stay in Florida? I mean, after everything happened. You could have gone back home."

George knows the answer to this. He knows the real answer. Part of him wants to tell the truth. Wants to describe how even though both Sapnap and Dream lived hours away, some part of him still hoped that he would run into them in a grocery store. Or that sometimes, he would open Google Maps and type in the address to their old house, watching the dashed blue line connect where he was to where Dream was. Or that even though he hadn't played Minecraft in months, he can't bring himself to open YouTube because he knows that he still has notifications on for Dream's channel.

"There's no difference between me coding here and me coding in London," he says instead. "Didn't see much of a point to leave. It wasn't that hard to find a job here." He turns to meet Sapnap's gaze. Their eyes meet, and for a moment, George feels like Sapnap is about to call his bluff.

Instead, Sapnap grabs some cereal, and makes a motion like he's about to throw it. George nods, leaning back a little. Sapnap throws some in an arc towards him, and George opens his mouth, and catches it. He looks back at Sapnap with a triumphant smile, and Sapnap uses this moment to lean over quickly and swipe his cinnamon-sugar covered hands over George's hoodie.

"Hey!" George exclaims, moving back and getting to his knees, brushing the sugar off with the front of his hands. He cleans it up the best he can, then turns to Sapnap, pouting. Sapnap makes a kissy face at him, and he tries to keep pouting, but he feels the laughter bubbling in his chest. He

turns away, shaking his head and giggling. "You are so immature," he says, but there is no heat behind his words. Sapnap is laughing as well.

"I missed you, Georgie," Sapnap says, simply, once they've both caught their breaths. George exhales.

"I know," George responds. He sounds apologetic. They sit in silence for a while. It's a weighted type of silence -- heavy, suffocating.

Sapnap sighs, and George turns towards him. Their eyes meet for a moment; George feels *something*, and it feels like a lot. George swallows and looks away, Sapnap's gaze burning.

"Tell me something George," he says, sounding pained, "something that's true." The sincerity in his tone made George feel anxious. He shifted in his seat, toying with the ends of his sleeves.

"I've been having trouble sleeping," he says, finally. Sapnap looks at him expectantly. "Sometimes I stay up late and watch the sun stream in through my window, and I watch the colors flood in." He takes a deep breath. This was hard. "Nothing becomes something. The world is bright again." It wasn't much, but it was something true.

"Does it help?" Sapnap asks. He meets his eyes for a moment, holds his gaze for a bit too long.

"No," George says, "it doesn't." He grips his hoodie tightly.

"Dream gave you that hoodie, didn't he?" Sapnap said, gesturing towards it. "When we first moved here, right?"

George is quiet for a bit. His silence answers the question. Eventually, Sapnap speaks again.

"Do the collab, George. I miss you. Dream misses you. I know you miss us." George fiddles with his sleeves more.

"It's not that I don't want to," he says, "but it's hard."

"I know it is," Sapnap says, in a suggestive tone, wiggling his eyebrows. George shoves him lightly, and Sapnap puts his hands up in mock surrender. "You set yourself up for that one."

"But in all seriousness," Sapnap continued, "I know it's hard. But it's not going to get easier."

"I haven't really *spoken* to Dream in years, part of me still thinks he hates me --"

"He doesn't hate you." Sapnap says, with full certainty. "He loves you. Even now." George turns away at that, biting the inside of his cheek, willing himself to not feel anything at those words.

George is silent for a long time. Sapnap leans back, shoving his hands in his pockets.

"Alright," George says, after what feels like an eternity. "I'll do it."

Visiting Feels Like Coming Home

Chapter Summary

"It's kind of funny," Sapnap says, staring at his hands. He is gripping the wheel tightly, now, and his knuckles are turning white. He doesn't look at George when he speaks. "Visiting here feels like coming home."

Chapter Notes

"You know, one loves the sunset, when one is so sad" - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry,
The Little Prince

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The sun rose over the horizon, turning the sky into a brilliant pink color. Sapnap squinted, then pulled down the sun visor. George sat in the passenger seat, leaning against the window, watching the sky as the sun rose. Sapnap glanced over at him, smiling softly to himself. The sunlight outlined his silhouette, making it seem like he was glowing. The sun made his hair look a few shades lighter. Angelic, almost. It was nice to see him like this. Gentle, in a way. Less sad in the glow of the morning.

"It's pretty," George says, wistfully, breaking the illusion. There's a certain weight behind his words. They feel lonely. Sapnap grips the steering wheel and turns his gaze back towards the highway.

"Yeah," Sapnap responds. Sapnap glances over again, briefly. "It is."

It's quiet, in his truck. The radio had broken a few weeks ago, and he hadn't gotten around to having it fixed. At this hour, the road was almost completely empty, with only the occasional car. Sapnap wondered about these people, living lives he knew nothing about. Where were they going, this early in the morning? Did they enjoy the sunrise? They were headed east, straight towards the light. The traveller in him imagined that they were headed straight into the horizon. No matter where he ended up, the sunrise and sunset were reliable. Something that doesn't change.

He was pulled away from this train of thoughts when George attempted to pull the sun visor down on his side, and a handful of postcards fell into his lap. Sapnap had forgotten he had placed those there.

"Sorry," George said, moving to organize them.

"It's alright," Sapnap replied, "you can leave them. They weren't in any order, anyways."

George continues to pick them up, but stops at one of them. It shows the skyline of New York.

"I was in New York, over the holidays last year," George says, "my family went to visit there. I flew back with them to spend New Year's at home." He turns the postcard over, but there is nothing

written on the back. It's pre-stamped though, with an American Flag stamp. "I should have sent you something. I like the postcards you sent me. I keep them all in my bedside drawer."

Sapnap feels a certain warmth at George's words. He had taken care to send both him and Dream postcards from all the places that he had visited. "It's alright, Georgie. I don't really have an address, anyways." The past few years, he had been travelling -- initially, it was international travel, from backpacking in parts of Europe and in Asia. He had even spent a few weeks in Australia. It was something he had always wanted to do, travel the world. He was fortunate enough to have a job he could do almost completely remotely, so as long as he had a working laptop and stable internet connection, he could work from wherever.

But for the past few months, he had been driving around the states. He had never been one to get too homesick, but after coming back to Texas and spending a few weeks there, the domesticity of everything hit him all at once. He had missed it -- being able to wake up in his own bed, eating home-cooked food. But though the initial wanderlust that had led him to travel had diminished greatly over the years, there was still something in him that felt as though he had long outgrown his childhood home. The past few months, he had been on an ever-lasting road trip. There was still something within him that felt restless when he stayed in the same place for too long.

"Is it alright if I look at these?" George said, still staring at the New York postcard.

"Sure, be my guest," Sapnap responded. George silently looked through the postcards, pausing every once in a while to examine some he particularly liked.

"Which state was your favorite to visit?" George asked.

"I like them all," Sapnap responded earnestly. "I mean, Texas always has a special place in my heart. The prettiest girls are from Texas." George laughs at his words. He straightens the postcards to the best of his ability, and puts them back in the sun visor.

"How long are you in Florida?"

"I'm not too sure, honestly. It's kind of nice to be back here. Lots of nostalgia."

"Yeah, I think I know what you mean."

Sapnap sighs, and it feels like longing.

"Is it the next exit to get back to your place?"

"Yeah, it is," George says. Sapnap turns right, off the highway. He drives past the quiet streets, and George stares out at the stores that haven't opened yet, past the houses where people were surely still sleeping.

Sapnap slows to a stop in front of George's apartment complex. They sit, for a moment, neither moving.

"It's kind of funny," Sapnap says, staring at his hands. He is gripping the wheel tightly, now, and his knuckles are turning white. He doesn't look at George when he speaks. "Visiting here feels like coming home."

George is silent for a moment. The air between them seems a little heavier, and Sapnap feels the weight of what those words imply clawing in the back of his throat. George looks at him, after a bit. His gaze is contemplative. Sapnap moves to say something, to erase the implications of those words, lighten the mood. But before he can speak, George moves and wraps his arms around him.

It startles him, but he lets himself relax after a moment, letting go of the steering wheel and shifting to wrap his arms around George. Sapnap moves his hand to the back of George's head, letting his fingers run through the wavy strands. George keeps his hair a little longer now than when Sapnap last saw him.

"I know what you mean," George says into his shirt. He buries his face into his shoulder, inhaling deeply, holding on tightly. Sapnap knows what this means. *I missed you too*. He can feel the meaning in the touch, in the way that George is borderline clinging to him. He can feel it in the way George doesn't pull away first.

When Sapnap finally leans back, George follows suit. He gives Sapnap a smile that doesn't quite meet his eyes, and promises to text him later in the day. Sapnap stares as he walks into the building, making sure George gets inside safely. George doesn't turn back. Sapnap sits there for a long time before he moves to drive away.

The motel room isn't much. A queen-sized bed, a set of drawers, a TV, and a desk shoved into the corner. The windows overlook the parking-lot; Sapnap can see where his truck is parked. He places his bag on the desk chair and rummages through it, eventually finding a clean t-shirt and some sweatpants.

It feels nice shower and to get into new clothes. He had been driving for two days straight to get to Florida, sleeping in the truck for the night. Sapnap lets himself fall asleep on top of the covers with wet hair, content to sleep for the day after spending the night awake.

He wakes up to multiple texts from George. He reaches towards the bedside table, where his phone is charging, yawning as he opens the notifications.

*just woke up, called in sick to work today.
thanks for driving me back
and for everything, really
it was nice to see you :]*

He smiles to himself and sends back a simple <3.

Sapnap exits out of their text conversation, opening the one directly beneath it. Dream hadn't responded to his last text -- *I'm down if George is*. He had read it almost immediately after Sapnap had sent it. Sapnap hadn't told him that he was in town, yet. He was considering just showing up at Dream's doorstep. Even now, he knew the way back by heart. But instead, he opens Snapchat, takes a selfie with the dog filter and a sticker with his current location, and sends it to Dream.

He sits up, stretching, groaning as his joints pop. It's almost 4:30 in the afternoon, the pillowcase is wet from where he had slept, his hair is a mess, and he's starving. There's a Waffle House a block away -- not the best quality of food, but still better than the fast food he had been eating on the trip here. Sitting down to a warm plate of waffles sounds a lot better than the drive through diet he had been subjecting himself to recently.

Sapnap runs his fingers through his hair, untangling the mess. He opts to keep his t-shirt on but change into jeans. The sweatpants are comfortable, but he plans to eat at the restaurant, and feels a bit strange at the prospect of eating out in his pajamas.

There's something nice about eating alone, he thinks. The Waffle House is nearly empty -- he has come in right between the lunch and dinner rush, so it makes sense. The wait time is nearly non-

existent, something Sapnap is grateful for. Sapnap is halfway through his waffles when he gets another text from Dream. He had opened his snap. Sapnap chuckles to himself, sending back a simple message: *because i wanted to see you, idiot*. Sapnap hesitates for a moment, before sending another message: *George too*.

He puts his phone down and calls over the waitress for another orange juice. She brings it over with a smile, and he thanks her gratefully. He takes a sip, and continues eating until he gets another text notification. This text is longer, and is sentimental. Figures, Sapnap thinks to himself, Dream's always been emotional. They had spent many nights together opening fan mail, and he had witnessed firsthand how Dream teared up some of the letters he had been sent. Florida made him nostalgic for those nights -- for the way they would stay up and laugh too loud at stupid jokes, the way his cheeks would hurt from smiling so much.

Those were the moments he missed most, Sapnap thought to himself. The smaller parts of it all. The way that everything seems funnier when you're sleep deprived. How they ended up borrowing each other's socks because it was easier to just do all of their laundry together. Being excited to see fan's reactions to each new video, reading the kind comments out loud to each other. Being the first person to see exclusive merch, and lightheartedly arguing over who had the best designed hoodies (Sapnap merch supremacy, even now).

Sapnap didn't realize he was smiling until he felt it slowly leave his face. All of those things, they were lovely, yes, but they wouldn't happen again. No matter how much he wanted them too. He understood what George meant last night, when he had exclaimed that he never knew how to respond to Dream sometimes. It was hard, because Dream had a way of putting meaning behind everything he said. These words felt different, when they came from him.

it's nice to be back here, Sapnap settles on.
i missed you.
visiting feels like coming home.

Sapnap feels the meaning of those words physically, feels the warmth and fondness behind them. Dream responds immediately. Sapnap doesn't look at the text right away. He places his phone face down on the table. His phone case is Dream's white smiley logo on a black background -- an old merch drop. Sapnap stares at the logo for a bit, before turning back to his plate. His waffles are getting cold. He finishes up, leaving the waitress a generous tip before heading back.

Sapnap doesn't go back into his room right away. Instead, he chooses to sit in the bed of his truck, enjoying the weather for a little longer. He pulls his phone from his pocket, opening his conversation with Dream again. He rereads the texts from earlier -- the sentimentality of them made him feel warm. He finally responds, sending a simple <3. Dream reads it as soon as it sends. Sapnap watches as the three dots appear, then disappear. He locks his phone and stares at the clouds in the sky, trying to remember things from what felt like a different lifetime. These sorts of memories -- they're fuzzy at the edges. The details are hard to remember. But Sapnap took care to remember the good parts. When everything was light.

"I want good things to happen," Sapnap says out loud, to no one. He shuts his eyes, and inhales deeply. "I want good things to happen," he says again, to himself. This isn't going to get easier. He knew that. It was still hard to be back here.

Sometimes, it felt like nothing had changed. Like he could walk through their front door, and Dream and George would be there, watching some stupid movie, or planning out video ideas and streams at their dining table. It wasn't that he regretted anything. Leaving to travel, going on an infinite hiatus that turned out to be the equivalent of quitting his job, those were all things he

needed to do. But occasionally, he missed them a little too much. He missed being young, and hanging out with his best friends. Travelling was amazing, yes, but it was also lonely.

Sometimes, it felt like everything had changed. Like when he realized he had gone two weeks without reaching out to either of them. Sure, he could text them anytime, and they were always friends, but it felt different. It wasn't an abrupt shift, like he would have thought it would be, but it happened so gradually that he barely even noticed. Like when he stopped sending "good morning" texts to them, or when he realized he had missed their birthdays. When Dream had sent him George's new address to send his postcards to (George hadn't even told him when he moved out). It felt odd. It made him sad for reasons he couldn't articulate. He knew it was worse between Dream and George, that was another *thing* in its entirety.

Sapnap checks his phone again, Dream hasn't responded, and he read the text over an hour ago. He runs his hand through his hair and sighs. He decides to message Dream again.

George said he would do it.

He leaves it at that, and exits out of his chat with Dream before he can respond. He opens his chat with George.

*i told Dream that you were down to collab
just text him back, will you?*

Sapnap turns his phone off after that, not waiting for a response from either of them. He stays in the back of his truck for a few more hours, and watches the sun set, thinking about everything and nothing.

Chapter End Notes

A little bit Sapnap-centric :) If you like it, leave a comment or kudos to let me know!
Next chapter is George-centric.

It's Nice to Hear Your Voice

Chapter Summary

There's a moment, George thinks, where you can feel the happiness leave you.

"It's nice to hear your voice," he says, and he feels like crying.

Chapter Notes

"All the space without you in it is empty" -- Iain S. Thomas, I Wrote This for You

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After George shuts his apartment door, he leans against it for a moment, wrapping his arms around himself and taking a deep breath. Seeing Sapnap again, for the first time in months, was a lot. Seeing Dream would be another beast entirely. He shuts his eyes, clinging tighter to the fabric of his hoodie. He lets himself sink to the floor, bringing his knees closer to him, making himself as small as possible.

The last time he had spoken to Sapnap, *really* spoken to Sapnap, was over a call. Sapnap had been in Texas, back in his room. It was the middle of the night, for both of them, but Sapnap was never the best at keeping a set sleeping schedule. George himself had been lying awake, staring at his ceiling, waiting for sleep that never came easily to him anymore. He was startled by his ringtone, even more so when he realized who was calling.

George could still remember snippets of their conversation. *It's weird being back here*, Sapnap had said, quietly. *It's weird to not be alone*.

It's not so bad, George had responded, alone in his room, *to be alone*.

You're not alone, right now. There was something about the way Sapnap said these words. *I'm here, and it's late, just like the good old days*. There was so much warmth in them, something a little too honest but not entirely true. A feeling George didn't know the name for anymore. It made him ache.

Yeah, he had said, *just like the good old days*.

You sound tired, Georgie, Sapnap had said. George knew what he had meant by this. *You sound sad*.

I am tired, he had responded. He could hear Sapnap sigh over the phone.

Are you alright? There was so much concern in the way Sapnap asked this. There was something delicate in his phrasing, the tone of his voice, like he was scared something would snap. Like he was walking on eggshells.

Don't ask questions you already know the answer to.

George was brought out of his train of thought by his cat pawing at his shoelaces. He reached over to pet her, and got an immediate purr in response.

"Are you hungry?" he asked her. George winced at the sound of his voice. He sounded like he had been crying, although he hadn't been. There was a certain rasp to his words, and his throat hurt. Shame that he never really learned how to smoke properly, he thought to himself, stroking his cat. She didn't acknowledge this question, instead choosing to crawl into his lap, rubbing herself against his stomach. George smiled at this, petting her.

He sat up, moving the cat from his lap so he could get up. She made a small noise in protest, but followed him to his kitchen, where he scooped her food into her bowl. He leaned against his counter and watched as she ate. There was a small crinkling noise from his pocket, and there he found the Raisinettes he had forgotten he had bought. George opened the package and popped a few in his mouth. This was as good a breakfast as any.

He pulled out his phone, checking the time, wincing as he realized there was no way he would be able to go to work like this. He made a quick call to his boss, explaining that he had woken up sick and would be unable to come in. His boss was understanding, probably because of the way George sounded absolutely exhausted. George hung up, placing his phone on the counter. He finished up the packet of Raisinettes, throwing the wrapper out then walking to his living room, laying down on his sofa.

The sun was fully out at this point, and the rays shining through his blinds made a few golden stripes across the wall and up to the ceiling. George held his hand up, softly, watching the shadow, the way the golden light curled around his hand. He was reaching. He curled his fingers, slowly, as if the light were something he could hold, could catch. Something precious he could keep.

He doesn't remember falling asleep. But when George wakes up, his joints hurt and his muscles ache. His entire back feels stiff. Figures, he thinks, the sofa was never that comfortable to begin with. He sits up and yawns, feeling relieved when he notices that his throat at least feels a little better. He feels both rested and exhausted at the same time. George usually had trouble sleeping, but something about last night filled him with a strange sort of exhaustion, as if he had run the emotional equivalent of a marathon and then gotten hit by a truck. It was nice to sleep after all of that. It was dreamless. There was comfort in not having to think about anything.

George pulls out his phone, sending a few quick texts to Sapnap. Last night was nice. He hadn't realized how much he missed Sapnap until he was right in front of him. When George had clung to him, right before he left, it wasn't so much a conscious decision as it was a need to be close. Even now, thinking about the way that Sapnap held him, he felt a warm feeling in his chest, tingling down to his fingertips. He moves to put his phone back in the pocket of his hoodie, but makes a face when he realizes how grimy the hoodie had become. The back of Sapnap's truck certainly wasn't the cleanest, and the cinnamon sugar he had smeared across the front had made the hoodie grimy in the worst way. Even his jeans looked slightly discolored, the dirt from the back of the truck clinging to it. A shower sounded quite nice at the moment.

George got up and made his way to his bedroom, grabbing some clothes before heading to the bathroom. He had just shut the door when he heard scratches on the outside of it. He chuckled to himself, letting his cat in and kneeling down to pet her.

"You're really clingy, you know that?" He scratched behind her ears, and the cat made a noise of

contentment.

He shut the door again and shrugged off his hoodie, placing it haphazardly on his nearly overflowing hamper. He looked at it, then sighed. He pulled his shirt off, making a mental note to do laundry after he showered, then balanced the rest of his clothes on top of the pile.

George set the water to the hottest setting, letting the bathroom steam up. He revelled in the way the water stung a little bit. It woke him up. He took his time, letting himself enjoy the warmth. When he got out, his skin was slightly pink. He wiped the fog from the mirror, taking a long look at himself. He had bags under his eyes, and his hair curled slightly at the ends from being wet. He ran his fingers through it, untangling it.

"I look like a wreck," he said to his cat, who was sitting on the floor, licking her paw.

George brushed his teeth and pulled on his clothes. He opened the bathroom door to let some of the steam out, then grabbed his hamper, taking care not to drop any of the clothes that were spilling out the top.

George is downstairs when he gets Sapnap's text. He bites the inside of his cheek and closes his eyes, trying not to think of the finality of it -- the definiteness of it all.

just text him back, will you?

Dream knew he had agreed. There was no backing out now.

His hands are shaking slightly as he opens his text conversation with Dream and is immediately greeted with a wall of text, from the last three messages he had been sent. The first was the initial invitation, explaining the idea behind the video, and the next two were a mix of disclaimer (Dream telling him he didn't have to do it if he didn't want to, and that he would be alright with it either way), and sincerity (about how Dream missed recording with them both, and how it would be really nice to have them). The final message ended with a heart, and George knows that his gaze lingers at it for a little longer than he should. He doesn't know what to say. It's hard to have to think about everything you type, but he's barely thinking when he sends his next message.

hey, want to call?

He locks his phone, placing it in his pocket. The dryer cycle has finished, and he focuses on putting his clothes back into his hamper to carry upstairs. He's about halfway there when his phone rings. He pulls it out, staring at the contact for a moment as it continues to buzz. George closes his eyes, trying to summon some bravery, and accepts the call.

"Hello?" Dream's voice is the same as it always has been. It's familiar, and comforting, and it fills George with some sort of longing. The kind of longing he hasn't felt for a very long time. A type of wanting that he didn't think he was capable of anymore. George feels his heart jolt. It aches.

"Hello?" Dream says again, a bit more uncertain this time. George snaps out of his stupor.

"Hi Dream," he says, moving to balance the phone between his ear and his shoulder. Saying his name out loud felt like praying. Something familiar that was almost completely gone. George forces himself to breathe before speaking again. "Sorry, I'm just getting my laundry." He shifts to continue putting his clothes in the basket.

"It's alright," Dream's voice feels like warmth, something golden. This, George thinks, is what

sunlight would sound like if he could capture it in a jar. He suddenly thinks of a line from something Dream had shown to him once. *You made the warrior in me tired*. He understood, now. This is what led great warriors to fight terrible battles. This was what bravery was forged from. To be able to come home to people like Dream. To light and warmth and everything lovely. George forces himself to push these thoughts away, to think only about the warm clothes in front of him.

After a moment, George finishes taking his clothes out. "Sorry about this, could you give me a moment?" He's a wreck. His knees feel shaky and he feels utterly breathless, and he can't tell if he wants to hang up or if he wants to tell Dream to keep speaking and never stop again. This is what hoping feels like, George thinks. "I just need to bring it upstairs."

"Take your time," Dream says softly. Fuck. He's so gone, and it feels like the hardest thing he's ever done but at the same time it feels like coming home. *You make everything hurt in the best way possible*, he wants to say. *I'm a wreck*.

He manages to get the laundry back to his apartment, and he dumps his clothes on the sofa without a second thought. George sits on the floor, staring at his phone. He had muted Dream while he climbed the stairs, scared that somehow, Dream would be able to hear his heart, and he would know. He gathers his composure and leans against the sofa, taking a few deep breaths before unmuting again.

"Hey, sorry about that," he says, and his voice shakes a little.

"Don't worry, you're good," Dream responds. There's silence, for a moment, before he continues. "Sapnap told me that you said you'd film with us."

"Yeah," George responds, "I did." His words hang in the air, but it is light, and there's nothing to weigh them down. "I saw Sapnap last night."

"Yeah? He didn't tell me he was in town until today. Guess I'm not his favorite anymore." Dream's words are lighthearted, but they feel careful. George responds with a joke, making Dream chuckle. It was really nice to talk to each other like this. He missed it. But something in him felt so sad, a strange sort of misery. Nothing they said to each other felt like it had any weight anymore. Nothing to weigh him down. Nothing real. There was something there, maybe, but it all felt hollow. George lets out a chuckle at something Dream says, but it's forced. Pushing the bitterness down, George suddenly remembers something.

"I don't have a microphone," he tells Dream, groaning at his forgetfulness. "I don't even have a proper webcam. I'm so sorry, I completely forgot. Maybe I could order one? I didn't mean to-"

"Hey," Dream cuts him off, "don't worry about it." Dream pauses for a moment, before continuing. "You know," he stops speaking, and George feels his hesitation.

"You know," Dream starts again, a little more brave, "since Sapnap is in town, maybe we could film it in person?" George feels his brain malfunctioning at these words. In person? It was almost completely overwhelming to hear Dream's voice, but to see him, that would be-

"You don't have to if you don't feel comfortable," Dream says, quickly, as if he could read George's thoughts. "I think it would be nice, though," he adds on, after George is silent for a bit. There's more weight behind this statement. There's something *real*, something honest.

He knows his answer almost immediately, and the words come pouring out of him before he can stop them.

"That would be nice," George says. He hears a noise and glances up, seeing his cat curling up in the warm laundry. The sight makes his heart melt a little. "But-" he cuts himself off, suddenly feeling bashful.

"But what, George?" Dream asks. He speaks gently, with anticipation.

"This is going to sound stupid," George responds.

"So, same as usual then?" Dream retorts, causing George to roll his eyes and giggle.

"Shut up," he responds, still giggling slightly. "I have no one to feed my cat." The words sound dumber outloud, and George can feel the tips of his ears getting red. It was a five hour drive, at least, to their old house, and George still didn't have his license. Even if he fed her as soon as he left and right when he got back, he would still feel too guilty letting his cat go hungry for a few extra hours.

"You have a cat?" Dream asks, surprised.

"Yeah, I got her two weeks ago." George looks back up, and coos when he sees she has fallen asleep in the warm laundry. He snaps a quick picture and sends it to Dream. "She is small."

"Aww, she's cute," Dream says, "she's so tiny." George makes a noise of agreement, reaching over and stroking her head. "Just like you," Dream chuckles to himself, and George scoffs at this, continuing to pet his cat.

"You could bring her, you know," Dream says.

"I would, but she doesn't like pet carriers, and I don't think an Uber would let her in without one," George responds. He sighs. "I'm sorry, this is so annoying." Dream laughs at his words. "What's so funny?"

"George, you were planning on getting an Uber here?" Dream responds, "Why don't you just get your license?" George flushed at this.

"I don't need it, I don't even have a car," George says. They go back and forth on this for a bit, with Dream saying it would be so much more convenient if he could drive, and George insisting it's not necessary.

"I could pick you up," Dream says. George falters slightly at these words.

"Dream, I can't make you do that, it's like, 5 hours. You'd be driving for most of the day, and into the night on the way back. It would be too much for just one day." Not to mention, the thought of being alone in a car with Dream for a few hours was daunting.

Dream contemplated this for a moment.

"Then stay the night," he responded, "it's not like there's no room here. There's your old room-" he cuts himself off, remembering something, "actually, you can take my room and I'll take the couch."

"What was that about my old room?" George asked, intrigued. It didn't feel strange to talk about this anymore. He could hear the way Dream got flustered, stuttering slightly. "Dream, what is it?" he said, smiling to himself.

"Patches likes it there," Dream said, slightly bashful. George sat for a moment, processing these words, then--

"Dream, did you give my room to Patches?" it sounded even more ridiculous out loud, even more so with how Dream protested, claiming she just liked to sleep in there because it was the warmest place in the house. George barely was listening, he was laughing too hard. "It makes sense, she always liked me more than you."

"Hey!" Dream protested more at this, but George could only laugh harder. His stomach hurt from laughing so hard. Soon, Dream was laughing as well.

"My cheeks hurt from smiling," George said, once he had caught his breath.

"You have a nice smile," Dream said without thinking. George felt himself flush at these words. For a moment, he felt brave.

"I bet you can't wait to see it in person," he said. Dream took a moment to process this.

"You're coming?"

"Yeah. But only if Sapnap stays as well."

"Of course," Dream said. He sounded breathless. George felt his heart drumming in his chest in the best way. They worked it out between them -- Dream could drive down and pick George up this Friday, after George got home from work. They would film over the weekend. At these plans, George felt something light inside of him -- not the walking on eggshells type of light, where it felt like nothing they said to each other mattered, but the cheerful type of light. Like forgetting what it's like to be sad. Like nothing bad ever happened between them. For a moment, everything was light.

"You know Dream," he started, choosing his words carefully, "I haven't felt this excited for quite some time." The words hung in the air, teetering on the edge of too honest.

"Me too," Dream responded, "I've missed you," he says, quieter. There was weight behind these words, and they were heavy, sinking into George's stomach. They felt raw. If George's words were teetering on the edge of too honest, Dream's were plunging straight to the heart of it. Like there was nothing to be afraid of. George didn't know how to respond.

There's a moment, George thinks, where you can feel the happiness leave you.

"It's nice to hear your voice," he says, and he feels like crying.

"You too," Dream said. After a few minutes of silence between them, George hangs up. He looks over to his cat, still sleeping in his laundry. The sun has gone down, and his apartment is dark.

"I'm a wreck," he says, out loud. The realization of what he has agreed to dawns upon him slowly. One weekend, in their old house, with Sapnap and Dream. "Fuck."

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 If you like it, leave a comment to let me know and make my day!!

I Cried When You Left

Chapter Summary

"You know," Dream says, "I cried when you left."

"The first time?" Sapnap asks, eyes still fixed firmly on the skyline. Dream exhales shakily.

"Every time," he says.

Chapter Notes

"Everything stays, but it's still changing" -- Rebecca Sugar

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Honestly, Dream didn't *really* think that Sapnap would show up at his front door without warning.

Sure, his friend was impulsive (to say the least). In hindsight, Sapnap *had* told him he would be there ASAP, once Dream explained the situation with George.

He just didn't expect ASAP to mean *less than 6 hours after his text*.

Dream had been streaming Minecraft speedruns. Though Minecraft speedrunning wasn't as popular as it once was, and it tended to attract fewer viewers than his other content, it was familiar. It was a way for him to distract himself, to think of nothing but the world on his screen for a few hours.

He didn't want to think too much. The last few days had been rough -- after his call with George, he lost more than a few hours of sleep trying to wrap his head around everything. Dream had texted Sapnap two days after he had confirmed with George -- it took him that long to wrap his head around the whole thing.

Honestly, he didn't know what he was doing. He felt way in over his head. Seeing Sapnap, seeing George, having both of them under one roof -- it was a lot. There was too much to sort through, too many possibilities, too many memories. It was suffocating. Overthinking is like drowning, only worse.

Dream had streamed for longer than anticipated, ending at just over 5 hours. No facecam, not tonight -- he was afraid that anyone watching would be able to tell that something was off. He leaned back in his chair, rubbing his eyes.

He then reached for his phone, turning it on. He had shut it off as soon as he read Sapnap's text: *I'll be there ASAP*. Dream had started streaming not long after. He had too much to think about, too much that he didn't want to think about.

His brows furrowed when he realized he had 5 missed texts from Sapnap. He opened their conversation, but his phone started ringing before he could read the messages.

He accepted the call, sitting up as he answered. "Sapnap?"

"Dream!" His voice sounded far too awake. Dream glanced at the time; it was nearing 4 in the morning. "Let me in?"

"What?"

"I'm outside!"

For a moment, Dream sat in disbelief. In order to get here this quickly, Sapnap would have had to have left as soon as Dream had texted him.

"You're kidding," Dream said.

"Come check for yourself!" Sapnap said cheerfully. Dream made his way to his front door. He opened it, and stood there, frozen for a moment. Sapnap was indeed outside, standing on the front steps, grinning like a maniac. His hair was long, to the point where Sapnap kept it tied at the nape of his neck. He also had a beard, which made him look older than he was. His eyes were the same, though. Still just as bright and mischievous.

Okay, so he hadn't been expecting Sapnap to show up without warning, at this hour, nonetheless, and maybe he wasn't quite prepared for how different Sapnap looked. Dream knew, of course, that he looked different -- Sapnap made sure to send him pictures from the most ridiculous, touristy attractions he visited. Always with those stupid Snapchat filters. But there was a small part of him that still thought of Sapnap the way he was three years ago, baby-face and all.

So, Dream didn't expect Sapnap to show up when he did. But what he expected even *less* was to be almost immediately tackled as soon as he opened the door. The sheer force of it nearly knocked him backwards, but Dream managed to steady himself, wrapping his arms instinctively around the younger boy.

"Hey," Dream managed to say, still quite confused at this turn of events.

"Hi Dream!" Sapnap sounded exactly the same, and the genuine happiness in his voice tugged at Dream's heartstrings. "I liked your stream, I was watching it while waiting for you to let me in. Didn't want to interrupt."

Dream pulled him in tighter, resting his cheek on the top of Sapnap's head. This was unexpected, but not unwelcome. There was a strange sort of familiarity to it, like Sapnap was coming home after a very, very long trip. *Welcome home*, Dream thought, letting himself relax into the hug. *I've missed this*.

"Dude, you've been here for like, two hours, and all you've done is criticize me."

"All I'm saying is I don't understand how you have three different types of olives in your fridge but no milk or eggs." Sapnap bent down to move the jars around. "Dream, this ketchup bottle is empty."

"It's there for the aesthetic!" Dream exclaimed, indignantly. "Also, so that I don't forget to buy more." Sapnap took the empty bottle out and placed it on the counter, closing the fridge. Dream huffed.

"You are so lucky you're cute," Sapnap said, laughing at Dream's annoyance. "I don't know how

you've lived this long without me." Dream stuck his tongue out, and Sapnap reached over in an attempt to ruffle his hair. Dream ducked away, but he was smiling.

"Off of those olives and ketchup, obviously," Dream said. "Good thing you showed up when you did, I just ran out of ketchup. I would have only lasted a week longer." At this he wrapped his arm around Sapnap, leaning against him. Sapnap pushed him off, good-naturedly.

"Ketchup and olives?" Sapnap made a face.

"Well, mostly takeout if I'm being honest."

"That's kinda gross," Sapnap said.

"Hey, don't act like you're any better. When's the last time you've even been in a real kitchen?" Dream replied. Sapnap leaned against the countertop.

"Dream." Sapnap looked at him, questioning his life choices.

"Sapnap." Dream responded, defending his life choices. There was amusement in his eyes.

"Clay." Sapnap seemed exasperated at this point, gesturing to the empty bottle of ketchup on the counter.

"Nick." Dream took the bottle and placed it upright, in a dramatic and obnoxious gesture.

They stared at each other, for a moment, and Sapnap shook his head.

"I've been eating fast food for the past, like, six months. It's gross," Sapnap said. He pondered this for a moment. Being able to make your own food was a luxury to him now, one that he very seldom had the opportunity to partake in.

"We can go grocery shopping when the store opens," Sapnap said, "I doubt George has eaten anything homecooked recently either. You both are fucking terrible cooks."

"Hey, I can cook," Dream said. "Like, pasta." Sapnap gave Dream a look.

"That doesn't count. Plus, I do not trust the words of a man living off of three different kinds of olives," Sapnap replied jokingly.

"Dude, you've been here for like, two and a half hours, and all you've done is criticize my food, my diet, and then my cooking skills." Dream said. There was no malice behind these words, but a warm kind of fondness was apparent from his tone.

"Keep whining," Sapnap replies. He rolls his eyes at Dream's pouting face before continuing. "It would be nice, you know, to cook for you guys. It's been a while since I've done anything domestic like that."

Dream smiles at this. The mere thought of the three of them eating dinner together made him feel warm inside. They talked for a bit longer, working out the finer details. Dream had to pick up George on Friday -- it was currently very early morning Thursday. Sapnap could go grocery shopping later, when everything opened. Dream declined to go with him -- he found shopping incredibly boring. He was also incredibly indecisive when it came to picking out different brands of food, hence why he tended to just order all his meals. On Friday, while Dream went to go get George, Sapnap could have the whole kitchen to himself, to cook whatever he wanted.

"How about Sunday roast?" Sapnap asked.

"I thought we were talking about Friday," Dream responded. Sapnap held back a witty retort, finding his friend's cluelessness endearing.

"No, it's not -- it's like, a bunch of roast things. Meat and vegetables. Mashed potatoes."

"Better than olives?" Dream asked.

"Better than *sex*, dude." Sapnap responded. Dream laughed, shaking his head.

"Whatever you say," Dream said.

"This is so cute, Dreamie," Sapnap said, "I'll be like the housewife, waiting for my husbands to come home." Dream laughed at this, and Sapnap gave him a kissy face, making sure to sound as obnoxious as possible.

"You'll always be more than that to me, Sapnap," Dream said, once his laughter had died down. It was quiet for a moment, and Dream felt an inexplicable warmth in his chest. He stared up at the ceiling, smiling softly to himself.

"It's kinda funny," Sapnap said, and Dream turned to look at him as he spoke. "Part of me still thinks of it as our home."

"That's because it is," Dream said, almost immediately. Sapnap gave him a sad sort of smile.

"It's not really," Sapnap said. He sighed, before continuing, "I miss it."

There was a part of Dream that wanted to argue, because really, it was always going to be their home. There was a larger part of him that knew it would never be their home again, not in the way he wanted it to. There were times when Dream would want nothing more than to call them, both of them, and tell them that they could come back whenever they wanted. That he would be waiting. That he missed them. But both Sapnap and George knew this already.

"The house feels empty without you in it," Dream remarks, without thinking. "Even now." He bit back a yawn, barely missing the soft smile Sapnap gave him. The sun was bound to rise soon.

"Tired?" Sapnap asked, his voice gentle.

"It's alright," Dream responded, "I don't mind staying up, not when it's you." The genuineness of those words made Sapnap feel warm.

"The sun is about to come up," Sapnap replied, gently. Dream gazed towards the window, where he could just barely tell that the sky was getting brighter.

"So it is," he said softly. Dream walked over to the window, staring out towards the street. "Want to watch it?"

They ended up on the grass on the front lawn. Dream had one hand behind his head, laying down. His other was outstretched towards where Sapnap was sitting up. Sapnap had one knee propped up, resting his arm on it. His other arm reached towards Dream. Their fingers were just barely brushing against each other, but neither of them pulled away.

There's something different about nights like these. The ones that turn into morning before your

eyes. Watching the sky change slowly, but then all at once. The chill of the morning air gave Dream goosebumps.

There's something honest about mornings like these. The ones after restless nights. The warmth of the light reaches, stretching across the horizon. The silhouettes of a waking world. There's something true in the first light of the morning. Something genuine. Something good.

"I want good things to happen," Sapnap says, softly, so quietly Dream barely hears him. Dream moves his hand slightly closer to Sapnap, allowing their pinkies to interlock.

"They will," Dream says, like it's the truest thing in the world.

He turns to look at Sapnap, who doesn't look away from the sky. It wasn't quite daytime yet, but it definitely wasn't night anymore. The sky was no longer completely dark. It was a lovely shade of blue, darker than the daytime sky. It existed, at the moment, in an in-between state. Not quite day but not quite night either.

All of them, in a way, existed in an in-between state. Not completely removed from each other, but definitely separated now. Even now, sitting only a few feet apart, Dream somehow can't shake the feeling that they have never been farther away from each other.

"I've been all over the world," Sapnap says, "but this still feels like home."

Dream sees it. He sees the slight hesitation in Sapnap's words, in the way he speaks slowly, carefully. *And I've been here*, Dream thinks, *but you still feel like home*. It's a bitter thought, but it's not so much of an angry one as it is a sad one. They sit in silence for a moment longer, and the morning breeze gives Dream chills. It's nice, in a way. It reminded him he was alive. That this was real.

"You know," Dream says, "I cried when you left."

"The first time?" Sapnap asks, eyes still fixed firmly on the skyline. Dream exhales shakily.

"Every time," he says. Sapnap says nothing more, but moves his hand closer, interlocking their fingers, and squeezing Dream's hand. He rubs circles on Dream's skin, and it's so gentle and lovely that it fills Dream with a warmth that makes his heart both pound and ache.

The last time Sapnap had visited was months ago. When he had left, Dream had felt the burning sting of loss. It took all his willpower to not try to stop him, to not grab him by the shoulders and not let him leave ever again.

Is there anything I could have said to make you stay? Dream had asked him one night, when he was feeling particularly reminiscent.

No, Sapnap had responded. *I don't think so*. Dream knew his answer before he had sent it. He knew the answer as soon as he asked the question, but there was still some part of him, a stupid little voice that tells him that everything would have worked out had he just been enough.

It was lonely. Sure, Dream had friends. He talked to a lot of people. But once he shut the computer off, everything was just a little too quiet. There was nothing for him to come home to, really. Not anymore. It burned, and it hurt just as badly as the first night Dream had spent alone. Sure, it got easier. But it still hurt.

Dream looks away from Sapnap. If Sapnap noticed the tears welling in his eyes, he didn't mention it.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for your lovely comments <3 They really motivate me to write!

Does anyone have any opinions on chapter length? I tend to just write until it feels narratively right, so I haven't been paying too much attention to it. Or any opinions in general? I crave writing feedback :)

It's Different When You're Right in Front of Me

Chapter Summary

"It's different when you're right in front of me," Dream says. George gives him a soft look, and sits on the couch next to him. Their knees are almost touching.

"Easier?" George doesn't look at him as he speaks. Dream ponders, for a moment.

"Sometimes," Dream responds. He glances over at George, who seems to be contemplating something.

"You seem more like a memory than a person sometimes," George says.

Chapter Notes

"Here is the true story. You saw a beautiful boy and it fucked you up." -- Caitlyn Siehl

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The first time he met Dream in person, it was like rebuilding. Like seeing the sky up close for the first time, figuring out where to put the stars, where the sun belongs. Connecting the dots. When they saw each other at the airport, it took all of two seconds until they were in each other's arms. George had clung to him then, hands clenched tightly to the fabric of Dream's hoodie, so hard that his knuckles turned white. Physical proof that Dream was right in front of him.

It starts like this. George wakes up thinking about Dream, and he lets this happen. George lets himself remember, and he's not sure if it makes him incredibly happy or incredibly sad. It's nice in a way, he supposes, to have something to miss.

The first time Dream told George he was in love with him, it wasn't so much a confession as it was an acknowledgement. A simple observation. Said in passing, as if remarking on the weather. *I'm in love with you*, Dream had said, and it felt like a reminder. Dream hadn't even looked up from his computer. *I know*, George had responded, sitting on Dream's bed, scrolling through his phone. And that was all there was. Simple. There is nothing more lovely than to love and be loved. It made George want to go back, live in that moment. *How nice it is*, he thinks. *To have had something so lovely to return to.*

The closest that George ever got to telling Dream that he was in love with him came in the form of a late night conversation. They had been lying on George's bed, tangled in the sheets. He had his head on Dream's chest, and had his arms wrapped around him, listening to his heart beat, feeling him breathe. Dream had one hand in George's hair, running his fingers through it. They couldn't have been closer if they tried.

Do you ever think about the stars? How far apart they are? George had murmured into his chest. His eyes were closed, and it was warm. *They have so much space between them. It's a vacuum.* When Dream didn't respond, George continued to quietly ramble. *You know, sound requires a*

medium to travel through. It can't exist in a vacuum. There can't be noise in space. George moved his hand to grip Dream's shirt. *There needs to be something else there.*

Dream hummed, and continued to stroke George's hair. It felt safe, to be held like this. It felt like home. *Why do you ask, Georgie?* His voice was soft, gentle. The rumble of it sent chills down George's spine.

I think, George said, feeling his heart swell, *love is the same way.* Dream held him tighter at that.

I love you too, George. Nothing more needed to be said.

George takes a deep breath. He reminds himself where he is: in his bed, alone, staring at the glow-in-the-dark stars on his ceiling. It's still dark outside. He has to go to work today.

Dream is coming to pick him up today.

For a moment, George thinks of the stars again. He thinks of what it means to miss something so much that he could physically feel the loss. *Oh, to be a star,* he thinks. *To be constantly dying. To be constantly becoming.*

It goes like this: George goes to work, and he thinks about Dream on the way there. He sits through his meetings, and remembers the time when Dream let him cut his hair, how his nose scrunched up when some strands fell into his face. He goes out to lunch, and he knows just by looking at the menu exactly what Dream would have ordered. He squints at his computer screen, trying to figure out how to fix the code in front of him, and swears he can feel the ghost of Dream leaning over his shoulder, offering to help.

Get out of my head, George thinks, biting the inside of his cheek. He sits on the bus home, staring out the window. He would see Dream soon. The real-life Dream. *If he could see you, right now, he would be able to see his reflection in your thoughts.*

Get out of my head, George thinks, and he is afraid.

It's not earth shattering, seeing Dream. It's not world-building either. It feels, simply, like a return. Like opening up to a random page in your old favorite book, and still being able to recite it word for word.

Dream was tall. He always has been tall. George knew this, of course. But being reminded of it in person was a whole different thing entirely. Dream was tall, and he was standing in the doorway of George's apartment.

"Hey there," George said, staring up at him. Dream had his hands in his pockets, looking down at George.

"Hey," Dream said gently, a soft smile on his face. They stood there for a moment, taking each other in.

"Sorry, I just got home," George said, stepping back to let Dream in. "Let me get changed."

"It's alright," Dream replies, walking in. As George shuts the door, Dream turns to look at him. George was still in his work clothes -- a button up and a nice pair of pants. "You look nice."

George doesn't reply, instead choosing to take in the image of Dream in his apartment. It felt strange, to say the least. Their eyes meet, for a moment, and George looks away, absolutely certain that Dream can see right through him.

"George--" Dream starts to speak, but is interrupted by George's cat rubbing against his legs. "Oh, hello!" Dream's entire tone changes, and he bends down, picking her up. She purrs at this, content with the attention. George's heart nearly melts at the sight: his cat was small, but she looked absolutely tiny in Dream's arms. George smiles, reaching over to scratch between her ears.

"She's clingy," George says, "but she's cute."

"Sounds like someone I know," Dream says teasingly. George flushes at this.

"Shut up," he says. Even now, Dream always made him feel warm.

"What's her name, by the way?" Dream asks. George looks sheepish.

"Honestly, I don't know," he says. "I couldn't think of one, so I kind of just call her cat."

Dream chuckles. "Hi kitty," he says, petting her. His fingers brush against George's, and he looks back at him and smiles. George returns the smile, savoring the touch for a moment before moving his hand away.

"I'm going to get changed," he says to Dream, "you can sit on the couch if you want." George walks towards his bedroom.

Dream walks towards the couch with the cat still in his arms. He pauses when he sees the pile of clothes on the couch.

"George, is this the laundry that you were doing when I called you a few days ago?" Dream calls out.

He hears something that sounds like a muffled "maybe". He rolls his eyes and smiles -- George never liked folding clothes. He takes a seat next to the pile, placing the cat on his lap.

While waiting for George, Dream glances towards the clothes. Absentmindedly, he reaches over, pulls out a t-shirt, and folds it. It feels strange to be in George's apartment, to say the least. It's strange to imagine George's life now, going to work a 9 to 5 job, dressing business casual. It's a bit too much for Dream to think about, so he busies himself. George would probably appreciate the help, anyways. George's cat, annoyed with the lack of attention, jumped off his lap in favor of sitting by Dream's feet and licking her paw.

Dream stops his folding when he sees something neon-green in the pile. He blinks. Dream pulls the hoodie out, and holds the fabric in his hands, staring.

He remembered giving George that hoodie. It seemed so long ago, almost a different lifetime. Thinking of that George, giggly with sweater paws, and George now, exhausted in his work clothes -- it was so *different*. It made him ache.

Dream held the hoodie up to his nose, smelling the fabric. It smelled like George. It was so *familiar*, and it had been so long -- the scent made him feel tender. He closed his eyes, inhaling deeply.

"Hey," Dream jumped at the sound of George's voice. He looked up to see George standing right in front of him, now wearing a black t-shirt and jeans. George raised an eyebrow, and Dream flushed

slightly, putting the hoodie back on the pile.

"Were you smelling my hoodie?" There's something teasing in George's tone.

"Sorry, I-" Dream stutters, "it's just-" he takes a breath to collect himself. He doesn't completely fluster, but he feels the tips of his ears turn pink. "You still use the same detergent."

"Yeah," George says. For a moment, they stare at each other. George looked like he was holding back a laugh at Dream's expression.

"It's nice," Dream said. The way that George smiled at that -- Dream felt the awkwardness in him dissipate, turning into a longing type of fondness. He takes another deep breath, feeling brave.

"It's different when you're right in front of me," Dream says. George gives him a soft look, and sits on the couch next to him. Their knees are almost touching.

"Easier?" George doesn't look at him as he speaks. Dream ponders, for a moment.

"Sometimes," Dream responds. He glances over at George, who seems to be contemplating something.

"You seem more like a memory than a person sometimes," George says. Dream can feel his hurt because he knows *exactly* what George means. He never wants George to feel hurt.

"I'm real, George. I'm right here." George turns to look at him, and their eyes meet.

"Prove it," George tells him, and it's nearly a whisper. This is all Dream needs.

He leans forward and wraps his arms around George, pulling him close. George clings to him tightly, like he's afraid to let go. Dream can feel him shaking. "Hey, it's okay," he whispers, pulling him closer. "It's okay."

"This is hard," George says. Dream moves to be closer, pressing George flush against his chest.

"I know," Dream responds, rubbing circles into his back, "but you're worth it." He lets George cling to him. "Take as long as you need."

"Your car is a mess." George wasn't wrong, but Dream argued back on principle.

"You know, both you and Sapnap have a habit of judging me everytime I see you." They're on the highway, and Dream looks straight ahead as he speaks.

"Dream, you can barely see out of the back window. Why do you have so many boxes in here?" George is in the passenger seat, with his cat on his lap.

"I had to empty out my PO box the other day, it was full. I haven't gotten around to bringing all the stuff inside."

"How long are you going to let them sit in here?"

"About as long as it takes for you to fold your laundry once you do it," Dream retorted.

"Touché," George replied, lightheartedly. It was nice to just talk to Dream. Conversation flowed between them easily, with lighthearted banter. It didn't feel hollow, not like when neither of them

could see the other. This was real, and it made George feel light. There was a beat before Dream spoke again.

"You know, two of our fans got married the other day," Dream says, "they met because of Dream Team Twitter."

"You're kidding," George replies, "really?" Dream chuckles at his surprise.

"Yeah, they sent me an invitation. I sent them a wedding gift."

"That's good," George says. "Good for them." He shifts slightly, being careful not to wake his cat. His legs were falling asleep. "That makes me feel so old."

"It's because you are, George," Dream responds, teasing. George rolls his eyes at this.

"I am not that old," he says indignantly. Dream laughs at this.

"Do you want to hear something insane?"

"What?"

"Tommy just turned 23. That's how old you were when you guys met." George felt his brain short-circuit. He would forever think of TommyInnit as the loud, obnoxious teenager he had met him as.

"Jesus. Wasn't he like, twelve yesterday?"

"Basically," Dream said. George is quiet for a moment, attempting to process how much time had passed. "We're senior citizens, Gogy!" Dream says, in an exaggerated British accent. George laughs at this, smiling fondly.

"You're an idiot," he said.

"And you're old," Dream replies.

"No, we're old," George said. It's strange to think how long they had known each other. Well over a decade, at this point. "Do you ever think that we watched each other grow up?"

"Well, you watched me," Dream replied, "you never grew."

"Shut up," George said. Dream smiled.

"I get what you mean though," Dream said, his tone more sincere. "It's pretty crazy to think about." Dream moves his hand, turning on his blinker to change lanes.

"We have a lot of memories together," George remarks.

"Yeah," Dream said, "I wouldn't trade them for anything." There was something so genuine in the way Dream said this. His voice was so soft, gentle. It made George feel sentimental.

"This is nice," George said. He yawned, then glanced at the time. "How much longer until we get there?"

"About an hour or so," Dream replied. He glanced over to George, who was blinking sleepily. "Did you want to sleep? I can wake you up when we get there." George nodded.

"I didn't sleep too well last night," George said, closing his eyes. "I was nervous to see you," he

admitted.

"Are you nervous now?"

"I was, a bit, when I first saw you. Not anymore, though. This is nice." Dream smiled at these words, and at George's sleepy voice.

"You can sleep, George," he said, softly. "I'll be here when you wake up."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!! Leave a comment if you want to make my day <3
Happy new years!!!

I Don't Want to Be Alone

Chapter Summary

"I don't want to be alone," George says, and he looks away, feeling shy under Dream's stare. "I don't-" he pauses, letting himself take a deep breath and compose himself. "I don't like being alone." The truth of the statement almost burned him from the inside out.

Dream is silent, and George doesn't look at him. He closes his eyes, taking a few more breaths, before continuing.

"Can you stay with me?"

Chapter Notes

"That's the problem with memories: you can visit them, but you can't live in them." --
Shaun David Hutchinson, *We Are the Ants*

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

This is how to never stop loving: have a beautiful boy fall asleep in your car. Turn the music down, so it's not so loud as to bother him. Glance over, every once in a while. Notice the way the streetlights cast shadows over his cheeks, how exhausted he looks. At the next red light, allow yourself to watch the way he breathes. Let yourself be reminded of the way it felt to hold him, to run your fingers through his hair and make sure that nothing could ever take him away. Drive slowly along your neighborhood streets. Think only of wanting. Think only of him. Pull into your driveway, park your car. Close your eyes, for a moment, and take a breath.

Dream takes a breath. He looks over. George looks so peaceful in his sleep -- it's almost a shame to wake him up. Dream glances down at the cat in George's lap, who is curled into a ball, but awake. He reaches over, stroking her fur. She purrs in response. He pulls his hand back and looks at George again, letting himself take in the image for a little longer. Dream closes his eyes, for a moment, and ignores the way his heart aches.

When he opens his eyes again, Dream reaches over and runs his hand through George's hair, slowly. George shifts, for a moment, before his eyes open, and he turns to meet Dream. Dream lets himself move to cup his cheek, reveling in the sleepy smile George gives him. He runs his thumb on George's cheek, just for a moment, before letting his hand fall.

This is how to never stop being sad: love someone. Know that they will leave and they might not come back. They walk over to the front door, together, and Dream knows he is far gone. He lets this happen.

When George first walks into the house, the first thing he notices is that it smells amazing.

Although he would never admit it, Sapnap was an *amazing* cook. George takes a deep breath -- it was heavenly. His stomach grumbles -- the sandwich he had for lunch seems like so long ago.

"You can put her down," Dream says, gesturing to the cat in George's arms. "Patches is around here somewhere, and I think Sapnap put more cat food out earlier."

George kneels down, putting his cat on the floor and letting her wander off. She immediately bounds towards the large cat tree in the corner, pawing at one of the hanging strings.

"You spoil your cat," George remarks. Dream walks in behind him, shutting the front door before proceeding to take off his shoes.

"She deserves it," Dream responds. He places George's duffel bag onto the couch (he had insisted on carrying it for him). "Plus, look who's talking." George shakes his head, but he's grinning.

"Some things never change," George says, getting back to his feet. "This looks almost exactly the same." George looked over the living room. He could almost imagine that this was still his home. Some part of him felt as though it was. Dream walks over and stands behind him. George looks up, and Dream smiles softly at him. He smiles back, feeling warm.

The illusion is broken when Sapnap runs out of the kitchen, spatula in hand, and tackles George so hard he *actually* knocks him over.

"Georgie!" Sapnap nearly screams into his ear, causing George to shriek in reply. Sapnap exaggeratedly clings to him, making kissing faces as George attempts to push him off.

"Get off!" George tries to shove Sapnap away to no avail. "Dream, help me!" George exclaims, squirming, attempting to break out of Sapnap's grasp. Dream is no help, as he is doubled over in laughter.

"You should have seen your face George!" Dream gasps, trying to catch his breath. "I haven't heard you scream like that in so long!" He's laughing so hard that he is kneeling on the floor, right next to them.

"It's not every day a yellow man comes out of *nowhere* and tackles you!" Sapnap was wearing the only apron Dream happened to own, which was a pale yellow. Both Dream and Sapnap laughed at this, while George continued to try to escape. "Sapnap, let me go!"

"Never!" Sapnap moves his hands to George's stomach, starting to tickle him, making George laugh, and scream again. George finally manages to push him off, and sits on the floor, panting while Sapnap laughs. "George, you made me drop my spatula," he says, reaching over to grab it off the floor.

"Oh, *I* made you drop your spatula? You're the one who attacked me!" George retorts.

"It's been *two seconds* and it already feels like I'm babysitting," Dream remarks, finally managing to stop laughing. He notices Sapnap creeping over to George. "Sapnap, you're going to kill him if you keep attacking him -- don't make me put you in a time out."

Sapnap pouts. "I missed him!"

"You saw me less than a week ago!" George says, having caught his breath. He tries to stay angry, but can't hide the smile that creeps to his face.

"Still missed you," Sapnap says, "I've been cooking all day, all for you guys. I just want to be

appreciated." He makes an exaggerated sad face.

"Sapnap, you were still sleeping when I left," Dream remarks. "You must have woken up at like, 3 pm today. That's not the whole day."

"That doesn't mean I can't miss you," Sapnap says. He scoots over to where Dream is kneeling, giving him a hug from behind. Dream rolls his eyes, but puts his hands over Sapnap's. There's a fond look on his face. "I hope you're hungry," Sapnap says, resting his chin on Dream's shoulder.

"We actually ate on the way here," George jokes, "got McDonald's. We didn't bring you back anything because we hate you." He almost laughs at the appalled look on Sapnap's face.

"Don't make me tickle you again," Sapnap says. George puts his hands up in mock defense. Sapnap sticks his tongue out.

"Let's eat," Dream sounds exasperated. "You two are literally children."

"But you love us," Sapnap says. Dream sighs, looking over at Sapnap, then at George.

"Yeah," he says. Dream is smiling, and there's so much warmth in his gaze. "I do."

"Is it good?" Sapnap asked, staring at the other two in anticipation. He had gone all out for this meal. Roast beef, mashed potatoes, glazed carrots and string beans, even Yorkshire pudding.

"Eh, it's alright. Only *slightly* better than McDonalds," George replied cheekily. If he were to be honest, it was the best meal he'd had in a while. He didn't like to cook himself - Sapnap would never let him live down the time he burnt pizza rolls by putting them in the microwave for twenty minutes instead of two - so it wasn't often George had the chance to indulge like this.

"Fine then, give it back. You can order McDonalds," Sapnap said, reaching to grab George's plate. George moved it back, swatting his hand away.

"I'm kidding," George said, "this is really good." He took another bite. It was incredible. It tasted like home. This felt like home.

"This is the best food I've had in awhile," Dream remarked. It wasn't just the food. Sitting with his friends, in their old house -- it was so painfully domestic. Also, it had been a while since he had actually sat down to eat with anyone. It was nice that his dining table finally was getting some use out of it.

"You're welcome," Sapnap said. He looks towards George, then at Dream. "I missed this."

"Yeah, me too," George responded. He looks at Sapnap, meeting his eyes and giving him a soft smile. "I feel warm."

"Warm's a good way to say it," said Dream. He glances over at the two of them, and feels a familiar warmth rising in his chest. "I feel warm."

"Do you guys want to watch something?" Dream asked. They were in the living room. Sapnap sat on the floor, leaning against the couch, where Dream and George were sitting. Dream had his feet in George's lap -- he had claimed he needed to 'stretch his legs'. George rolled his eyes at that, but

he let it happen.

"I think Tommy's still streaming," Sapnap said, "I was watching it earlier." Sapnap had George's cat on his lap. He stroked her fur as he spoke, and she purred.

"Tommy's streaming? Isn't it like-" George glances at his phone "almost 6 AM for him?"

"Yeah, but he and Tubbo and some of their other friends are doing a 24 hour charity thing," Sapnap responded. He started scratching behind the cat's ears, and she meowed in response, moving into the touch.

"Put it on," Dream said, tossing Sapnap the remote. Dream moved his foot to playfully poke George in the stomach. George grabbed Dream's leg and pushed him away, giving him a warning look. Dream gave him a playful look. Sapnap navigates to Tommy's channel, pulling up his stream.

"That's Tommy!?" George exclaimed, staring at the screen in disbelief. He knew, of course, that there was no way that Tommy would look exactly the same as he did eight years ago. But some part of him still thought of Tommy as the lanky teenager he once was. "He looks so different!"

"Why is his hair purple?" Dream said, furrowing his eyes at the screen. "That's new."

"I think dying his hair was a donation goal," Sapnap said. "It wasn't like that a few hours ago."

"Could you unmute it?" George asked, and Sapnap fumbled with the remote for a bit before unmuting the screen. "Holy shit, his voice." Tommy's voice was deeper, and when he laughed, it was richer, less high-pitched.

"They're playing Jackbox -- let's join the audience," Dream remarked, pulling out his phone.

"Ooh, Quiplash," Sapnap said, picking up his phone from where it lay on the floor. "That takes me back."

"Is that Tubbo speaking?" George asked.

"Yeah, that's Tubbo," Dream said, momentarily looking up from his phone. "His voice is way deeper than it was."

"Guys, I feel so old," George moaned.

"Don't worry George, you're only like, what? Fifty-seven?" George rolled his eyes, leaning over to playfully shove Sapnap, who yelped and moved to push him in return, laughing.

"Shh, I want to hear the prompt," Dream said, directing their attention back to the stream. The first prompt came up on screen.

"Mark my words, blank is making a comeback," Tommy read the prompt out loud to his stream. The two responses popped up. "The Sleepy Bois or The Dream Team." Tommy broke into laughter. "Man, that's too soon."

"Too soon? It's been years Tommy!" Tubbo said, in a teasing tone.

"I still have hope!" The audio from the stream became chaotic for a moment, as more voices chimed in, as well as some laughter.

"I see we're still in Tommy's head rent-free," George joked.

"That's such a coincidence," Dream remarked, laughing. "We just started watching as well."

"That's so weird. Choose the Dream Team. We're better," Sapnap said. Dream laughed and shook his head, but George saw him select the option on his phone. "If we win, I'm donating to the stream."

"Really? I'll donate as well, it'll be funny." George laughed. "We should donate too, then we can put in a message."

"Neither of you have streamed in literal years," Dream said. "You're going to make Twitter panic." He looked thoughtful for a moment, then broke out into a grin. "I'll do it as well, that'll make them go crazy."

"Man, you love messing with Twitter," Sapnap responded. "Hey, we won!"

"Only barely," Dream said. They only had the majority by six percent. "But let's do it."

George opened up Twitch on his phone. "It's a good thing I remember my password," he remarked. "I don't actually know how long it's been since I've logged into Twitch, probably over two years. Do you think I'm still verified?"

"Probably, I still am!" Sapnap exclaimed. He had logged into his Twitch himself. "This will be funny to watch, I hope someone clips it."

"Oh, they definitely will," Dream said. "Tell me when you donate, I'll send mine in right after so they come up at the same time."

"Whoa, I'm still verified!" George said. He opened up StreamLabs. "I'm going to put 'finally remembered my twitch password' as the donation message," he said, laughing to himself.

"I'm going to put 'just stole Dream's credit card' on mine." Sapnap said, causing Dream to roll his eyes and George to chuckle. "Do you wanna donate like, five-hundred each? It's to charity anyways."

"Yeah, and that way they'll know it's real," George responded, typing in the amount on his phone. "Ready to submit?"

"Yeah, let's do it at the same time," Sapnap said. "Three, two, one." They both sent their donations in, with Dream donating shortly after.

"I donated five-thousand," said Dream. "I didn't put a message in though."

"It doesn't matter," said George, "it's still going to a good cause." He puts his phone away and lets his hand rest on Dream's knee, subconsciously rubbing his thumb along the bare skin.

"Man, Dream always has to outdo us," Sapnap said, sighing dramatically. "It's his Leo showing."

Dream grinned, then reached over to ruffle Sapnap's hair. Sapnap dodged his hand, ducking slightly.

"Hey, it's your donation Sapnap!" Dream said, gesturing to the screen.

"Sapnap with the five-hundred dollars! 'just stole Dream's credit card'", Tommy exclaimed. He laughs, shaking his head. "Do you reckon that's the real Sapnap?"

"I doubt it," Tubbo responded. "I don't see his name in your viewer list."

"Yeah, I don't think-" Tommy was interrupted when another donation appeared. "GeorgeNotFound with another five-hundred?! 'Finally remembered my Twitch password' -- Gogy?!" George laughed at the old nickname, combined with Tommy's incredulous voice.

Dream wheezed at Tommy's expression. "He looks so confused!"

"Just wait until your donation goes through," said Sapnap, smiling.

"That's so strange chat-" Tommy started, but he was interrupted yet again with another donation.

"Dream with the *five-thousand dollars*, what the fuck!"

"That has to be real," Tubbo said. "That's Dream." He sounded surprised as well. "I think we accidentally summoned the Dream Team."

"It must be," another voice in the stream said.

"Well, thank you to Sapnap, George, and Dream," Tommy said, still in disbelief. He went on to explain the charity they were raising money for, thanking everyone who had supported them.

"That was fun," Dream remarked, still grinning. They had stopped laughing so hard, but there was a pleasant atmosphere about them.

"Yeah," Sapnap responded. He looked up at Dream and George, a soft smile on his face. "It was."

"Guys, we're trending on Twitter," Dream said, scrolling through his phone. Clips of their donations were circulating, along with Tommy's shocked reaction.

"Already? It's been like, fifteen minutes," Sapnap said. He looked back down to his phone, opening twitter. "My timeline is just those clips," he remarked.

"I think they miss us," George said, jokingly. He had pulled out his phone again, opening Twitter as well. It had been a while since he had actually used the app -- he didn't see much of a point to it anymore. His timeline, currently, was just the clips of those donation messages, along with a few hopeful sentiments of a Dream Team reunion. "They miss the Dream Team, huh?"

"Yeah," Dream remarked. He looked at George, who didn't look up from his phone. The fans weren't the only ones who missed it. Dream let himself remember for a moment. He smiled softly. "They do."

Here's the thing about saying things out loud. There's a certain honesty to it that can't be hidden.

This is what George wants to do: capture the joy of it all and store it in a jar to keep. To hold it close so that the feeling could never escape again. There was so much warmth in this house. Everything was so soft, so lovely, so familiar. It hurt. This life -- this simple, lovely, gentle life -- was no longer his. But he could pretend.

George bites the inside of his cheek and lets himself pretend.

Sapnap had gone to his room earlier in the night. He had some things to do for work -- some emails he had to reply to that he had been putting off. He had gotten up from the floor, stretched, then walked away from them. George's cat followed in suit. *Figures*, George had thought. His cat was needy. Dream had laughed it off when George complained, telling him that Patches also had slept in Sapnap's room the night prior.

"Guess we're in the same boat," Dream had said, shifting his legs off of George's lap. He moved himself closer to George, putting an arm around him. "It's you and me." George was quiet, but leaned into the touch.

This is how to never stop loving: put your arm around a beautiful boy, and don't fight the urge to be honest.

"I love you," Dream says, rubbing slow circles into George's skin. George sighs at this, and leans in, letting himself rest on Dream's shoulder.

This is how to be brave: let yourself be honest. Here's the thing about hearing those words from Dream. They either built him up or broke him down. It was quiet, but it was a weighted quiet, not because it was hard to be here but because it was too easy.

There's a part of George that wants to push it all away, to gently move from Dream's hold, leaving a space between them. To distance himself like this would be to capture the memory, to hold it so fondly and never let it go. It would mean it could never be taken away. He knows that Dream would understand. But that would be cowardly.

George takes a deep breath and decides to be brave.

"I don't want to be alone," George says, and he looks away, feeling shy under Dream's stare. "I don't-" he pauses, letting himself take a deep breath and compose himself. "I don't like being alone." The truth of the statement almost burned him from the inside out.

Dream is silent, and George doesn't look at him. He closes his eyes, taking a few more breaths, before continuing.

"Can you stay with me?"

Dream lets himself stare, pulling George in when he feels him trembling.

"For you," he says, speaking softly into George's hair, "always."

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was hard to write -- it would have been out way sooner, but I just couldn't find a way to be happy with it. Hopefully it's better now :) Thank you to everyone who's commented, your comments really keep me going and leave me motivated!! <3 Please let me know if you like it <3

I Want to Be Brave

Chapter Summary

"I want to be brave," Dream says, "but I don't think I remember how." Sapnap gives a sad smile at this. "This is difficult."

"What's difficult?" Sapnap asks. "Having us here?" He feels Dream's breath hitch at the question.

"No," Dream responds. "More like how easy it is to have you here." He takes a few more deep breaths. "The hard part isn't having you here. The hard part is knowing that you'll leave, and not knowing if you'll come back."

Chapter Notes

"But even in longing, I still feel the pronging of misery's poisonous claws" -- Svavar Knútur

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sometimes, Dream forgets how to be brave.

He feels it in his chest. The anxiety, the sinking feeling that everything could be taken away in a moment. The knowledge that wanting something isn't enough.

Dream doesn't know if he is enough. He wants to be enough.

He lies on his back, staring at the ceiling, with one arm behind his head and the other wrapped around George. The latter is asleep, his head on Dream's chest and his hand snaked under Dream's shirt, palm flat against his side. Dream revels in the contact, and listens to George's even breaths.

I'm yours, he thinks, *and you barely even know it*. If yearning could be something tangible, it would be in the shape of George's hands. His slender fingers, reaching. It would feel like this closeness: electrifying. Delicate. Terrifying.

The first time that George had slept in his arms, Dream was brave. This is what Dream remembers: a question, an answer, and the truth. Dream closes his eyes, and lets himself remember.

The question: *am I something to you?* George had mumbled it into his chest, so quietly that Dream had almost missed it. Dream had been surprised by the question, but more so by how scared George had sounded. To be brave, sometimes, is to be vulnerable.

The answer: *no, not something. You're everything*. He had moved his arm from around George, turning on his side so they were facing each other. Dream moved his hand to cup George's cheek, forcing their eyes to meet. To be brave, sometimes, is to be honest.

The truth: *to me, you are everything*. Their eyes had met, and even now, years later, Dream could

still feel the truth of those words pounding in his chest. George shifted, slightly, in his sleep, bringing Dream back to the present. Dream held him closer, rubbing soothing circles into his back until he settled. George unconsciously moved his hand further up Dream's shirt, letting more of his arm touch his bare skin. Dream tries not to think too much. But some part of him knows: to be brave, sometimes, is to love.

I'm yours, he thinks, and he feels like crying. *I'm yours, but you are not mine anymore.*

Dream thinks too much, sometimes. He lets the feelings bubble in him, until he feels them burning.

I miss you, he thinks, *but you're right here.*

If Dream was braver, he would have stayed, forced himself to think of nothing, stare at the ceiling until he fell asleep. But instead, he prys himself from George's grip, being careful not to wake him. He glances over, and takes in the way George looks in the moonlight. Ethereal.

He has all of me, Dream thinks, *and he doesn't even know it.*

Dream walks out of his room, shutting the door softly. He makes it two steps before he starts crying.

There's something so comfortingly familiar in staying up all night to do work. It's something Sapnap is used to: letting himself be consumed by emails and lines of code, staring at his laptop screen for hours until the sun starts peeking through the windows. It's nice to have something to return to, no matter how mundane it may seem.

He doesn't like to question too much. He's found that, when you start questioning, you start doubting everything. It's strange, to say the least, to be back in his old bedroom, with his friends under the same roof. There's something there -- something so familiar it burns. But there's also something so foreign here as well. He knows, of course, that this is no longer home. He hasn't called anything home in a long time. But here, in the dead of night, in the soft glow of his laptop screen, Sapnap lets himself think that it is.

He sends another email, updating the company he's doing freelance work for on his status on the latest project. He's almost finished, but there are a few bugs that he needs to iron out. There are a few more projects that he's working on, but those can wait.

Sapnap sighs, closing his eyes for a moment, then stretches. When he opens his eyes again, he looks towards the floor, where Patches is sleeping on his laptop charger, enjoying the warmth it emits. George's cat is there as well, using Patches as a pillow. George has managed to raise one of the clingiest cats in existence. Patches, it seemed, had resigned herself to be used as a pillow, as she made no move to push the smaller cat off. *She's too old to care*, Sapnap thinks to himself. He leans back against the headboard of the bed, and stares at the ceiling. *Maybe I'm too old to care.*

When the excitement and joy of the night had quieted, and things in the house were still, it left a feeling in Sapnap's chest that he isn't sure how to describe. Something bittersweet. Something to be missed, but also cherished. His laptop screen went dark for a moment, and he moved his fingers along the trackpad to keep it from sleeping. Sapnap selects a few irrelevant emails, then clicks the trash icon, cleaning out his inbox.

There's a perpetual hope that existed within him. It felt more prominent now, when he feels so out of place somewhere so achingly familiar. *This is not my life anymore*, he thinks. It's not that he

regrets leaving. That was something he needed to do. It was more that he couldn't pinpoint the moment in which this stopped being home.

He rubs his eyes. Staring at his laptop for a few hours straight made them sting.

I want good things to happen, he thinks. He runs his hand through his hair. *Being here is a good thing*, he reminds himself.

His thoughts are interrupted when the door creaks open.

Dream says nothing as he walks into the room, and takes a seat on the bed next to Sapnap, on top of the covers. He pulls his knees to his chest, and wraps his arms around them. Sapnap doesn't look at him, but he is hyper-aware of Dream's presence, the way his breaths are shaky.

"You've been crying," he says, still not looking up from the laptop. It is a statement, not a question.

"Yeah," Dream replies, and his voice sounds broken. "I'm tired."

"If you're tired, then sleep," Sapnap says. He knows it's not that easy. But sometimes, he knew that Dream needed to be reminded. Dream didn't respond immediately to this, instead resting his chin on his knees, staring straight ahead.

"I don't know what I'm doing," Dream says. He pauses for a moment, taking a deep breath. Sapnap feels the bed shift as Dream hugs his knees tighter. As if he were trying to hold himself together. "I don't know what I want."

"George is in your bed, isn't he?" Sapnap asks. He glances over at Dream, who doesn't look back. Dream doesn't respond, but his silence is enough to answer. After a moment, Dream speaks again, ignoring the hanging question.

"It's not that easy," Dream says, "but I want it to be."

Sapnap closes his laptop. He places it on the bedside table, then scoots closer to Dream. When Sapnap lays his head on Dream's shoulder, Dream doesn't pull away. They sit like that, for a moment. It's dark in this room. The slight moonlight shining in through the window allows him to be able to make out the outlines of the furniture. There -- in the corner -- his old desk. The door is slightly ajar. Dream didn't fully close it when he walked in. His backpack is resting against the closet door. Though he knows that it is a burnt orange color, it looks grey in dark.

Sapnap holds his hand up, and flexes fingers. He can barely see their outline. He thinks of George, the way he had rambled about colors in the back of his truck. His words echo in Sapnap's mind. *It's not that you can't see the color, it's that without the light, the color stops existing.*

"I want to be brave," Dream says, "but I don't think I remember how." Sapnap gives a sad smile at this. "This is difficult."

"What's difficult?" Sapnap asks. "Having us here?" He feels Dream's breath hitch at the question.

"No," Dream responds. "More like how easy it is to have you here." He takes a few more deep breaths. "The hard part isn't having you here. The hard part is knowing that you'll leave, and not knowing if you'll come back." Sapnap doesn't respond, staring at the wall. He lets Dream speak. He needs this.

"When George moved out, some part of me hated him." Dream sounds so resigned. "Sometimes I still think I do."

"You don't," Sapnap replies, not hesitating. "Even now."

"I don't," Dream agrees. "It would be easier if I could."

"Did you hate me when I left?" Sapnap asks.

"No. It's different," Dream says. The words leave a bitter taste in his mouth.

"I know," Sapnap says. "You love him."

"Loved," Dream responds, his voice empty. "Past tense." Sapnap is unconvinced, but doesn't push farther. He knows this is hard for Dream.

"He hurt you," Sapnap says. "But he needed to. It's hard to have this life. There's no such thing as work-life balance." When Dream doesn't respond, Sapnap continues. "Everything -- your life, your home, your friends, is tied with your job. It's hard, and it's not sustainable for some people. It wasn't for me or George." Sapnap feels Dream's shoulders tense. "That's not to say it wasn't amazing. I don't regret anything. I'd do it all again."

"I still love it," Dream says. "Everything. I get to create, everyday. I get to do what I love, everyday." He sighs. "If I stopped, I'd miss it too much. I couldn't leave."

"I don't regret leaving," Sapnap responds. "But that doesn't mean that I don't miss it." Sapnap's voice is calm. There is sadness in being here, yes, but there is also undeniable nostalgia. It's bittersweet. He's happy, so happy to have had something like this. But that doesn't mean that he wants it again. "It's just not my life, not anymore."

"But it is mine," Dream says. He sounds pained. "It's my life, even if you guys aren't in it."

"I know." Sapnap lifts his head from Dream's shoulder, and moves to wrap an arm around him. Dream doesn't resist, but doesn't lean into the touch, instead keeping his gaze straight ahead.

"Sometimes, I think that I could have made him stay," Dream says. "That I just wasn't enough."

"You were enough," Sapnap says. "You were. But it's too much." Dream is silent at this, and stares straight ahead, seemingly lost in thought. Sapnap rubs his shoulder, gently.

"He asked me to go with him, you know. Change everything." Dream's voice is hollow. There was once so much in him, but now, it felt like nothing.

"What did you tell him?" Sapnap asks. He knew that things between Dream and George were messy. But these details -- the finer, intimate ones, were not ones he asked about. It would have been cruel, to ask -- the pain, even now, was still there. It had worn away, over time, but there was an unmistakable hurt in Dream's tone.

"That I couldn't. I couldn't leave everything behind. I knew it was killing him. But we had been doing this job for so long that I didn't know what else to do. I still love it, everything I do." Dream shut his eyes at this, willing himself not to remember. It wasn't that he regretted it. It was more so that it hurt to think of a world where everything worked out, because that world could not exist.

"It's not for everyone, not for this long." Sapnap squeezed Dream's shoulder, and Dream leaned in, letting himself relax into the touch.

"No, it's not." Dream agrees. "But I thought we could make it work."

"It wouldn't have worked," Sapnap says. "You two needed different things." Dream is quiet at this, but he knows that Sapnap is right.

"You broke his heart," Sapnap says.

"And he broke mine." Dream sighed, closing his eyes and burying his face into his knees. "Nothing ever changes, does it?" His voice is muffled.

"Things change. Time changes everything." Dream knows that what Sapnap is saying is true. But it doesn't make it easier.

"Does it fix things?" Dream's tone is resigned, like he already knows the answer.

"Sometimes," Sapnap says.

"I don't know what to do, Sapnap," Dream says. Sapnap moves his arm from around Dream's shoulder, turning so that he is sitting fully facing Dream. He waits until Dream looks at him, meets his eyes.

"Well," Sapnap says, "are you happy right now?"

Dream pauses for a moment, thinking before answering. "Yeah," he says. "I haven't felt like this in a long time." Sapnap offers a smile, then gestures to the door.

"Then let yourself enjoy it," Sapnap says. "There aren't many moments like these."

You are not mine, but how can I tell myself that when you look so much like you are? George lay on his side, curled up in the blankets, hair tousled from moving in his sleep. He looked peaceful. Beautiful.

Dream walked to his side of the bed, lifting up the blanket and getting in. George, still asleep, senses the warmth behind him, and moves backwards into Dream. His back is flush against Dream's chest. Dream closes his eyes, and makes a decision.

You are not mine, but you are in my bed and in my arms. Dream lets himself curl around George, wrapping his arms around his waist, pulling him closer. Engulfing him. He buries his face into George's hair, inhaling deeply. *You are not mine*, Dream thinks, feeling sleep slowly overtake him, *but I am going to hold you like you are.*

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for all of your lovely comments!! <3 I really look forward to reading them, they make me so happy!! If you like it, make sure to let me know :)

Also AO3 is being really weird right now, so I really hope that this posts.

You Don't Need To Be Sorry

Chapter Summary

"I'm sorry," George says quietly. He nearly whispers these words, as if he is afraid the truth in them would break something. Dream doesn't respond, and for a bit, George thinks that Dream didn't hear him. He's about to repeat himself when Dream speaks.

"For what?" Dream asks. George can't see his expression, but this apology is hard enough as it is. To have to face Dream while speaking would be too much.

George's mouth runs dry as he tries to find the right way to articulate it. Loving you, he thinks.

"I never answer your calls," he says instead. "Or your texts."

"You don't need to be sorry," Dream says.

Chapter Notes

"We can't have it all. I know that, but humor me. We can't have it all, but we can have most of it." -- Caitlyn Siehl

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When George falls asleep, there's a part of him that expects to wake up alone. Dream would wake up before him, or leave once he had fully fallen asleep. He's okay with this. George lets himself enjoy the feeling of simply being here -- in Dream's bed, under Dream's covers, in Dream's arms. It was so familiar, to be lying together, like nothing had ever changed. There's something so delicately lovely about it.

Dream's bed smells like him, and it's intoxicating. George lets himself inhale deeply -- this smells like home. When he moves to lie closer, Dream doesn't move away. Instead, opens his arm and lets George come closer and rest his head on his chest.

"I missed this," George had whispered. It was late in the night, and George was half-asleep at this point.

There was a time where he would have been afraid to say these words, to let the honesty in them show. But he was too tired to be afraid. He had spent so long being afraid, and it was exhausting.

Let me have you like this, he thinks. In the morning, I can be alone, but just for now, let me have you like this.

Part of him knows that to let this happen is to be reckless. The careful thing to do would be to head to bed alone, fall asleep alone, and wake up alone. To be alone. That would be the safest: George could wake up in the morning, and pretend that there was nothing to be missed. But George is

reckless now -- the kind of reckless that only comes after forcing yourself to be careful for so long.

Dream didn't speak, but when George moved his hand to rest on the inch of skin between the waistband of his shorts, where his shirt had ridden up slightly, Dream made no move to stop him. George had made a decision: to let himself be reckless. To touch is to be reckless. To want is to be reckless. George moved his hand up, and Dream shifted slightly, letting George's entire hand rest against his skin.

Dream held him tightly, resting his cheek on the top of George's head for a moment. *This isn't love*, George had thought as he felt Dream relax, *but I can pretend it is*. George let himself cling to Dream, and as sleep overtook him, he allowed himself to enjoy it.

When George wakes up, he is warm, and Dream has one arm curled around his waist. He can feel Dream's even breaths against the back of his neck. George opens his eyes, squinting at the light. Dream is still asleep, and George makes no move to wake him. They were up late last night, and George reasoned it would be more polite to let him sleep. (If there was a part of him that just wanted to be held a little longer -- well, there was no harm in indulging in that.)

George stared ahead at the wall, absent-mindedly rubbing his thumb along the back of Dream's hand. The first morning they had woken up together, they had laid in bed for an hour afterwards, neither wanting to be the first to let go. *I let myself fall asleep in your arms*, George thinks, tracing his fingertips along Dream's skin, *and when I woke up, you were still here, and it was enough*. He sighs, resting his hand fully on Dream's again. *You're still here*, he thinks, *and this is enough*.

There's a certain gentleness that exists in mornings like these. George feels it now, in the morning light, in the warmth of the bed, in the softness of Dream's sheets. All mornings with Dream felt like this: safe, protected. Those memories, even now, are golden and light. Like nothing bad could ever happen.

George feels Dream shift behind him. Dream's arm moves from under George's hand to around his waist, pulling him closer.

"Good morning," George says. His smile is evident from his tone.

"Morning Georgie," Dream says. George moves his hand, and starts tracing his fingertips along Dream's arm. "That tickles." Dream's voice is deeper in the morning, the vibrato sending shivers down George's spine. George continues to trace lines into Dream's skin.

"Can you tell what I'm spelling?" George asks. He starts to draw letters, slowly dragging his fingers along Dream's arm.

"Wait, start again," Dream says. George obliges. "Is that a T?"

"Yeah," George replies. "How about this one?" He traces another letter.

"Is that a K?"

"No, try again." Dream goes silent, concentrating on George's movements. George repeats them again, this time dragging the lines slower, exaggerating each stroke.

"Is it a Y?"

"Yeah," George responds. He puts his hand down, resting it against the bedsheets. "T and Y,"

George says, "they stand for thank you."

"Why are you thanking me?" Dream asks. His voice is soft, and it makes George melt inside.

"For being here," George says.

"You don't need to thank me for that," Dream responds. George doesn't directly respond to this. He pulls the blanket up, and Dream lets him tuck it around them. It's almost too lovely of a moment. There's sunlight streaming through the windows, forming shapes on the walls. Glowing shapes with soft edges. George can count Dream's breaths, and match them: breathing in with the inhale, out with the exhale.

It's easy to be here. It feels soft. It's been a while since he had done something so lovely. There were so many moments like these -- but it had been so long since he had experienced being with Dream. If George thought about it too hard, it made him feel a distant ache for something that he wasn't sure he could come back to anymore.

"I'm sorry," George says quietly. He nearly whispers these words, as if he is afraid the truth in them would break something. Dream doesn't respond, and for a bit, George thinks that Dream didn't hear him. He's about to repeat himself when Dream speaks.

"For what?" Dream asks. George can't see his expression, but this apology is hard enough as it is. To have to face Dream while speaking would be too much.

George's mouth runs dry as he tries to find the right way to articulate it. *Loving you*, he thinks.

"I never answer your calls," he says instead. "Or your texts."

"You don't need to be sorry," Dream says. He sounds so certain that it makes George ache more. *It would be easier if you hated me*, George thinks. *That way, there would be something I could make right.*

He remembers leaving. On the day he moved out, Dream had offered to drive him to his new apartment. George had refused. If he let Dream drive him, he wasn't sure if he would be able to leave. *I left you*, he thinks.

"I hurt you," George says, his voice permeating with guilt.

"And I hurt you," Dream replies, and part of George wonders if Dream knew how *badly* George had wanted Dream to come with him. To be with him. He tenses -- the memory of it all still left a bitter taste in his mouth.

"I forgive you for that," George says. Dream's hand rests on his chest, and George is sure that he can feel his heart rate increasing. George moves his hand to rest on top of Dream's, and squeezes slightly. "I don't want you to think that I don't forgive you."

George can't see Dream's expression, but his tone is even. "And I forgive you," he says. George bites the inside of his cheek. There's a part of him that doesn't believe Dream -- he can still remember how hurt Dream had looked then. George's first night in his own apartment, Dream had called him three times in a row, and George had declined them all.

George bites the inside of his cheek and inhales shakily. "George," Dream says, "I forgive you, I promise."

Dream takes a breath. "Let yourself enjoy this," he says. "There aren't many moments like these."

George doesn't respond, but Dream's words bring him comfort. There's something optimistically resigned in his tone. There is nothing that they can do to change what has happened, but for now, they were together. It was enough. George forces his muscles to relax, releasing the tension in his shoulders. Dream hums, tightening his grip around George.

"Are you happy right now?" Dream asks. The question catches George off-guard, slightly. But he knows the answer right away.

"Yeah," George says. "I am." He makes a decision, then: it was weird to be here, but he was going to enjoy it. George had spent far too long wanting this exact thing: to be held in the soft glow of the morning. He needed this. "Do we have to get up?" George asks. He never wants to get up again, not if staying here meant things could stay lovely.

"We don't have to," Dream replies. George smiles at Dream's fond tone. "Sapnap will probably be sleeping for the next few hours. We can record when he gets up."

"We don't have forever," George says.

"No, but we have today," Dream replies. He pulls George in tighter, intertwining their legs and burying his face in George's neck. George can't help but laugh at the feeling, and he squirms as he feels Dream's hair brush against his cheek. "Let's enjoy it," Dream says. George turns around, and his eyes meet Dream's for the first time that morning.

Sunshine, he thinks, admiring the way the light catches Dream's hair, making it look golden. He can't help the smile that comes to his face. "You make me feel warm," George says.

"I'm glad, Georgie," Dream responds. He leans in, slightly, and for a moment George thinks that Dream is about to kiss his forehead. But instead, Dream rests his cheek on top of George's head. "You make me feel warm too," Dream says. George ignores the blush that comes to his cheeks.

There's a certain gentleness in mornings like these, and in Dream's arms, George had that same feeling: golden and light.

Chapter End Notes

Hi!! Big BIG thank you to everyone who has commented and left kudos!!! <3 It makes me smile so much!

This chapter has been the shortest one so far, but I hope that you still enjoy it -- if you do let me know by leaving kudos or a comment!! I promise you that I've reread the comments so many times when I'm looking for motivation to write <3

The next chapter will probably be really long :)

They Were All Good Days

Chapter Summary

"We were happy," Sapnap responds. There is a twinge of nostalgia in his tone.

"Those were good days," George says. The sentimentality of the statement is clear.

"They were all good days," Sapnap replies. A soft smile comes to his face. "Some of the best days of my life," he says. Dream puts his hand on Sapnap's shoulder, squeezing slightly. They watch the rest of the video, and a familiar warmth comes over them.

Chapter Notes

"There are all kinds of love in this world, but never the same love twice" -- F. Scott Fitzgerald

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Sapnap wakes up, he is warm. The sun streams into his room through the blinds. In the light, he can see some dust particles, gently floating in the air. It's calming. He waves his hand through the air and watches as the particles move as if they are dancing. Almost as soon as he puts his hand down, the dust settles again, slowly meandering once more.

He glances over to the side of the bed, where George's cat is napping in a patch of sunlight. He reaches over and pets her. She meows in response, opening her eyes and leaning into the touch.

"Hey there," he says. The cat gets up and stretches. "Good morning Kitty." She walks over, rubbing her body on Sapnap's arm. He chuckles, picking her up and putting her on his chest. She proceeds to make herself comfortable, tucking her feet under herself and purring. Sapnap absent-mindedly scratches between her ears, staring at the ceiling.

He can faintly hear Dream and George talking -- they're laughing about something. It's probably mid-afternoon, judging by how bright it is in his room. He's in no rush to get up -- if he needed to be awake, one of them would have come to wake him up by now.

Sapnap had slept well that night. He had gone to bed right as the sun was rising. He had stared at the wall, watching as the light brought color to his room. George's words from a few days ago rang in his head: *watch as the colors flood in, nothing becomes something*. Sapnap glances at the wall again. *The world is bright again.*

George had been so distant, that night. Sapnap felt it in his tone, and in the way George had fidgeted, avoiding his gaze. He had looked so exhausted. Even from a few feet away, Sapnap could see the bags under his eyes. It was frustrating, sometimes, to be friends with George. Oftentimes, Sapnap would go weeks without hearing from him.

It went like this: Sapnap texted George, and he knew that George might not respond. But he also knew that Dream had also texted, and he wanted to make sure that George was okay.

The last time George had talked to him about Dream, he had ended up crying on the phone about it. Sapnap had pulled over to answer the call, and stayed parked on the side of the road all night, letting George speak. Honestly, George had been pretty incoherent then, but it didn't matter if Sapnap understood, just that he was there.

When he had picked George up that night, one of the first things he noticed was the oversized neon-green hoodie: it made George look pale. He looked like a ghost. *Who are you haunting*, Sapnap had thought as George had gotten into his truck. Sapnap eyed the hoodie as George had looked away to put on his seatbelt. Dream's hoodie. *You're haunting each other*, he had thought as he pulled away.

Dream had never been one to hide his emotions. He wore his heart on his sleeve, even now. The first time Sapnap had realized Dream was in love with George, it was like remembering something he had forgotten. He saw it -- in the way Dream let George sleep in his old shirts, the fond look on his face when George would lay his head on his shoulder.

You're in love with George, Sapnap had said one day, in the middle of editing. Dream had looked contemplative at that, as if he himself hadn't come to the realization yet. After a moment, Dream had responded: *yeah, probably*. Sapnap had glanced up at him, smiling at the fond look on Dream's face. *You should tell him, Dream*. Dream had smiled softly to himself at that. *I think he knows*, Dream had said. Of course he did. Anyone could see it.

His train of thought is interrupted when he hears George scream, followed almost immediately by Dream's laughter. He smiles at the noise. *Let yourself enjoy it*, Sapnap thinks. There are many good things in the world, and this is one of them. To love is a good thing, a bright thing.

Sapnap moves the cat off of his chest, ignoring when she mews at him. He sits up, stretches, then gets out of bed. He glances at the bed for a moment, debating making it, but ultimately decides against it. He stands up, and walks towards the door, narrowly avoiding Patches, who is still asleep on his laptop charger.

Figures, Sapnap thinks, opening his door. *She's gotten lazier as she's gotten older*. He moves his backpack to the front of the door, propping it open so that Patches could leave if she wished.

George's cat follows him as he walks down the hallway. Sapnap is about to make his way down the stairs, but stops when he remembers something: he had carried the cat up here last night. He glances down at her.

"Do you know how to get down?" Sapnap asks. George's cat rubs against his legs in response. Sapnap smiles, leaning down to pick her up. "That's alright," he says. "We all need a little help sometimes."

It makes sense that Dream and George had gotten up before him. Sapnap doesn't really have a set sleeping schedule. He preferred to drive at night, as the roads were less crowded, thus resulting in him being somewhat nocturnal. Sapnap gets to the bottom of the stairs and places the cat down. She walks towards the kitchen, now seemingly more interested in breakfast than him.

Sapnap walks towards the living room where he hears George and Dream talking. Neither of them hear him coming. Unable to resist, Sapnap gets behind George and grabs his shoulders suddenly, making him jump.

Sapnap laughs at the way George yelps, and when he turns to glare at him, Sapnap just ruffles his hair.

"Good morning," Sapnap says, making his way to the front of the couch.

"It's almost 3 pm," Dream says, glancing at the time on the wall. Sapnap shrugs. Dream scoots over to make room on the sofa, and Sapnap sits.

"It's morning somewhere. What are you guys doing?" Sapnap asks, gesturing to all of the boxes.

"Dream has had these PO boxes in his car for the past week," George says, moving some bubble wrap to the side with his foot. "We're going through them."

"Anything cool?"

"Someone sent Dream a sword," George remarks, gesturing to a long package off to the side. "Dream tried to kill me with it."

"I did not try to kill you," Dream counters. "I was just showing you how cool it was--"

"You threatened me--"

"I was demonstrating how I would *theoretically* threaten you, not actually threatening you--"

Sapnap laughs. "That explains that scream," he says. "I heard it from upstairs."

"Oh, so you weren't going to come help me? What if Dream had killed me with it?" George says.

"He would never," Sapnap says. He looks at Dream, who seems slightly amused. "Not on purpose, anyways."

George is about to protest more, when Dream cuts him off by wrapping an arm around him.

"I'm sorry that my demonstration was too realistic," Dream says exaggeratedly. "I'll make sure that next time you *know* that I would never kill you." George huffs, but he is smiling, and Sapnap can see traces of pink on his cheeks. George looks like he slept well -- there are no bags under his eyes, and he seems quite lively today. Dream seems much better than he did last night -- his joy is clear in his tone. George and Dream bicker for a moment more, but Dream's arm remains around George. Eventually, George rolls his eyes and decides to concede, leaning into Dream's chest. Dream brightens at this, bringing his other arm around to give George a hug. Sapnap feels his heart warm at the sight.

"Did you guys eat breakfast?" Sapnap asks, breaking the spell. They both look towards him. "Or lunch?"

"Someone sent Japanese marshmallows," Dream says, untangling himself from George. He grabs a bag from the floor next to him and holds it out to Sapnap. "They're strawberry flavored and really good."

"That's not breakfast," Sapnap says, but he tries one anyway. Dream's right -- they are really good, soft with strawberry jam in the center. "Hey George, catch." Sapnap grabs a marshmallow and leans back, then throws it in an arch above Dream's head. George manages to catch it in his mouth, and gives Sapnap a triumphant grin. Dream shakes his head at them, but he is smiling.

"How about these crackers?" George says once he finishes the marshmallow. He rummaged

through one of the boxes, then held another package towards him. Sapnap can't read the language on the bag, but he recognizes the bright colors and the logo.

"I think I tried these once in Thailand," Sapnap says. He takes a cracker from the package and eats it. "Yeah, they taste super familiar."

"Someone sent a big package of Asian snacks," Dream says. "I don't know what any of it is, but the stuff that we tried is good."

"It is good," Sapnap agreed, "but it's not breakfast." He moves to get up. "Do you guys want pancakes? I can put chocolate chips in them."

"Pancakes are good," George says. Dream gives a thumbs up in agreement.

"Want to start filming after breakfast?" Dream asks.

"Sounds good," Sapnap says. "I'm going to go make breakfast for my children."

"Thanks mom," Dream calls out, jokingly. Sapnap walks into the kitchen. He kneels down, pulling out a coffee machine. Dream doesn't drink coffee, so the machine was in the back of the cabinet, and was slightly dusty. Sapnap placed the machine on the counter, blowing off some of the dust.

"George, do you want some coffee?" Sapnap calls out. He hears George shout out a yes please, so he takes out two mugs. He grabs the coffee and the coffee filter out from the cabinet, and starts brewing.

As Sapnap starts the pancakes, his mind wanders. That's the nice thing about cooking: it doesn't require much thought. It's routine, and Sapnap can let his mind wander while his hands do the cooking.

Where do I want to go after this? He thinks to himself. *After this ends?* Being here gives Sapnap the same feeling as he did when he had visited Texas: something sort of like homesickness. He had moved out about three years ago, but the Dream Team didn't officially disband until a year later. Sapnap had technically been on hiatus, but after about six months, it became clear to him that it would be too difficult to return.

It wasn't that he didn't miss George and Dream -- he texted them as often as he could. But the first time he visited them, after four months of travelling, he had realized that they lived a life he couldn't return to. They had sat down, and he had talked to them. Although they were saddened by it, they understood. He had outgrown YouTube.

A few months later, George had moved out, and Dream had posted an announcement on his channel. Thinking about it, even now, gave Sapnap a hollow feeling inside. The finality of that announcement was hard: it meant that things would never be the same.

Sapnap flips a pancake. It's golden brown: perfect. He hums to himself. The memory of leaving still stung, but that hurt was far outweighed by the good things that had happened.

It's nice here, Sapnap thought to himself. He knew that if he were to just ask, Dream would probably let him move back in. That possibility was tempting, to say the least. Sapnap slid the pancake off of the pan onto the stack. He ladeled more batter onto the pan, starting another one.

It's so familiar here. To move back would mean that almost nothing had changed. Granted, he would never go back to YouTube, so that had definitely changed. But the warm feeling he felt when visiting was always the same.

Sapnap overhears Dream and George speaking. He tries to make out their conversation, but to no avail. He thinks of them: sitting on the couch, giggling, being touchy. *They love each other*, he thinks, *present tense*. Sapnap smiles to himself, shaking his head. *Some things never change*. He slides the final pancake onto the stack, then sets it on the table with the rest of the plates and calls Dream and George to come eat.

"The mug on the right is yours," Sapnap says to George as he walks in. George takes the mug, but eyes Sapnap questionably. "I put some caramel creamer in it." George takes a sip.

"It's good," George says. He takes another long sip, savoring the warmth. "I like it."

"I thought you might," Sapnap responds. Truthfully, Sapnap didn't think that George actually liked black coffee. He had noticed the way that George had slightly grimaced at the taste last time. "You always did have a sweet tooth."

"Some things never change," Dream says, taking a seat. Sapnap and George follow suit. "These pancakes look really good, Sapnap."

"I know," Sapnap says. "I'm great."

"You are," Dream agrees. Sapnap looks at his friends, sitting around the table, and he smiles. *This is a good thing*, he thinks.

"We should film the intro first, it will flow better that way," Dream says, focusing the camera on the two of them. He leans back, double-checking the image in the camera, then hits record. He then takes a seat in the middle of Sapnap and George. They are sitting on the couch, with the camera pointing at them. They have YouTube open on the television, so that they can all see easily.

"Hey guys, Dream finally let me and George out of the basement-" Sapnap is cut off by Dream laughing. Dream shoves him good-naturedly.

"We've been trapped down there for so long, but Dream said that if we were in this video he would finally feed us-" George is cut off by Dream's laughter.

"You guys are impossible," he says, once he has caught his breath. "Let me do it."

"Hey guys," Dream starts, giving the camera a charismatic smile. "I'm here with the Dream Team, because recently, I've hit *fifty-million* subscribers." George whistles at this number, and Sapnap makes an exaggerated shocked face. "That's absolutely insane, and I thought to celebrate, I'd bring home the boys and react to our old videos."

"I'm ready to cringe," George says. "What's first?"

Dream takes the remote and navigates to a particular video on screen. "I thought we could start with this, because it's the first video where both of you had facecam on my channel."

Sapnap reads the title out-loud. "'Giving George five-thousand dollars to spend on Amazon'"

"Honestly, you should have just given me fifty-thousand dollars to spend instead of doing this video," George says. "The quality of your content is really going down."

"Yeah, I think it would be better if you just gave us money," Sapnap says. Dream laughs.

"We already started filming, we can't change it now," he says. Dream turns to address the camera once more. "Also, none of us have looked at these, I just chose a handful, but I haven't watched any of these videos, so all of our reactions are genuine."

"When's this video from?" George asks.

Dream scrolls to the description of the video. "2019, that's eight years ago."

"Damn, that's so long," George says. Dream nods in agreement, hitting play on the video.

"Your voice sounds different," Sapnap remarks.

"Yeah, it really does," Dream says.

"Damn, my microphone was really terrible," George says. "The audio is so bad."

"Dude, look how young I look," Sapnap says as the image of his younger self comes on screen. "The camera angle is so weird, I look so small."

"You are small," Dream says, chuckling. "You haven't grown since then."

"Not all of us can be ridiculously tall like you," Sapnap says, turning to look up at Dream. He looks back to the screen. "That filter on Bad is such terrible quality," he remarks as the image switches to that of their friend.

"How is Bad?" George asks. "This is making me miss him."

"Me too," Sapnap says. "I feel like it's been so long."

"I talked to him the other day," Dream says. "He's doing good."

"I'll text him later," Sapnap says. George nods in agreement. They continue watching.

"I feel like you can tell that we weren't all completely comfortable being on camera," Dream remarks.

"You don't even have a facecam in this video," George says.

"You know what I mean," Dream replies. "This was before we did vlogs. We hadn't even met in person yet."

"That's kind of weird to think about," Sapnap says. They continue watching the video, making short comments every so often.

I'm tryna have the best beard ever, the younger Sapnap says in the video.

"Best beard ever huh? I think you achieved that," Dream comments, looking over at Sapnap.

Sapnap smiles. "You know it," he says. He strokes his beard. "I finally got it."

"It's so weird how different you look," George remarks. "I think I look exactly the same."

"Yeah that's true, I look like a baby," Sapnap responds.

"Your hair is longer George," Dream says.

"Yeah, but that's it," George says. The video ends.

"I think that was the first video on your channel that wasn't Minecraft related," Sapnap remarks. Dream ponders this for a moment.

"Yeah, I think you're right," he says. "When's the last time either of you played Minecraft?"

"Honestly I couldn't tell you," Sapnap says. George nods in agreement.

"I don't even think I have Minecraft on my computer anymore," George says. Dream chuckles.

"You know, I was watching my old speedruns the other day," Dream says. "I was good. I don't think I could do that today."

"You're rusty," George says.

"It's not just that," Dream says. "Well, mostly I guess, but Minecraft used to be such a big part of our lives."

"Minecraft definitely made us," Sapnap agrees. "We're all still Minecraft boys at heart."

They watch a few of their more popular videos. The manhunts would be too long to react to, so they settle for watching compilations of some of the best moments. Dream had reasoned that the clips in compilations would probably be those which the viewers had enjoyed most, and probably the ones that viewers would be most interested in seeing their reactions to.

"That enderpearl play is honestly still incredible," Sapnap says. "I can't believe you managed to catch it. We would have totally won if George didn't kill me."

"It's not my fault, I thought he was dead-" George tries to respond, but Sapnap cuts him off.

"It literally is your fault, you should have waited until you knew-" Sapnap is cut off by Dream.

"Guys, this is literally almost a decade ago. Get over it," Dream says, shaking his head.

"I'm never getting over this," Sapnap replies dramatically. "I'm keeping this grudge until the day I die. You can put it on my tombstone." George shakes his head and moves to shove Sapnap, but Dream stops him.

"You guys are *literally* children," he says, laughing. "Let's watch the next video."

Dream reaches for the remote, and goes to a different video. This one seems to be from another compilation channel, rather than one of their own.

"This has clips from the first day on the Dream SMP," Dream explains.

"Which one?" George asks. There had been a new Dream SMP created for every major Minecraft update, as to keep the version as current as possible, and also to make sure that there was always fresh content to be created.

"The very first one," Dream says. "It was actually so much harder than I thought it would be to find stream clips from that day."

"That's before Sapnap and I started saving our stream vods," George says. They watch the first part of the video, which has clips from the first time they had spawned on the server.

"The SMP was so small back then," Sapnap says. "There were like, what? Ten people?"

"Even less," George says. He thinks for a moment, counting on his fingers. "I think there were eight when we first started."

Dream whistles. "It was a baby server," he remarks. "It grew so fast." He wipes an imaginary tear from his eye. They watch more. The video shows the first day of each person that was added on the Dream SMP.

"It's even weirder to think about where everyone on the original Dream SMP is now," Dream says. "Not a lot of them are doing Minecraft now."

"For people like Tommy and Tubbo, when I think of them, this is what I think of them looking like," Sapnap remarks. "My mind can't process that they have aged past this point." George nods in agreement.

"This really takes me back," George says. "It was actually so much fun to do this." They watch the rest of the video, remarking on where each person was now as the clips were shown.

The next video they choose to watch is an older one on George's channel.

"Minecraft, but mobs spawn every time," Sapnap reads the title. His brows furrow for a second. "Mobs spawn every time what?"

"Every time one of us got a sub," George says.

"Why didn't you put that in the title?" Sapnap asks.

"Because it would have been too long I think," George responds.

Dream starts the video. They watch it, laughing at the actions of their past selves.

"We scream so loudly," Dream remarks. He laughs when he hears George's voice reprimanding him: *Dream, I need food*. "George, you're literally whining in this."

"I think my mum actually came in and told me off while we were recording this," George says, laughing.

"This was super fun to film," Sapnap says. They watch a bit more, laughing at their past antics.

I have school tomorrow dude, the younger Sapnap says in the video.

"That's an iconic moment," Dream says. The smile on his face is clear from his tone. "Sapnap wholesome moment."

How do you have school tomorrow? It's quarantine. Dream's voice rings out, along with his laughter.

"Oh yeah, this was filmed during covid," George says. "Like, the very beginning of it."

"That was a weird time," Dream says.

"Back when no one knew what you looked like," Sapnap remarks.

"That's kind of crazy to think about," Dream responds, staring straight up at the screen. "Even when I did my face reveal, there were people who didn't believe it was actually me."

"People were saying that you hired an actor to be you for a face reveal," Sapnap said. "Some

people even thought that when we all moved in together -- can you imagine, that would take so much commitment."

"Just imagine that," George says. "This video, we come clean: this isn't really Dream, this is an actor we've been paying for years." They laugh, then watch the rest of the video.

The next video they watch is another Minecraft one, but is more recent than everything they had watched. It's one of their later videos, when they were all living together.

"This video was so annoying to film, do you remember that?" Dream says.

"No, what was annoying about it?" Sapnap asks. Dream looks at George to answer. George thinks for a moment, before it dawns upon him.

"Was this the one we were trying to film in the hurricane?" he asks.

"Yup," Dream responds.

"Oh my god, yeah, the power went out!" Sapnap exclaims. "That was the first big hurricane we were all here for."

"We recorded this video at least three times," George remarks. "The wifi even cut out at one point - it was not a great time."

"You can't even tell in the video, but we were so frustrated," Dream says. The video ends, and they sit for a bit, reminiscing.

"I think we have time for one more," Dream says, once a silence falls upon them. They had been filming for a while, and they had at least four hours of footage.

"Let's watch a vlog," Sapnap says.

"Which one do you want to see?" Dream says, navigating towards the correct channel.

"Let's watch the one where we moved in," Sapnap responds. Dream goes to the correct video, then hits play. It opens with a shot of George. I'm exhausted, he says to the camera.

"I had just flown in like 20 minutes before that clip," George says. "You didn't even give me time to think." The intro of the video plays.

"George was so jetlagged this day, he actually fell asleep in our bathtub," Sapnap says, chuckling.

"Oh yeah -- I forgot about that!" Dream says.

"None of our furniture had gotten here, but George was so exhausted, and the floors were all dusty and gross," Sapnap responds.

"He literally took a sweater from his suitcase and slept in the bathtub," Dream says, laughing. George shakes his head, but he is smiling.

"It was the cleanest place in the house!" George says. "I hadn't slept in like, twenty-four hours at least."

"We were so tempted to turn the water on," Sapnap says. "But we felt bad for him." He smiles at the memory. They continue to watch the video.

"We look so happy and full of life," Dream says.

"We were happy," Sapnap responds. There is a twinge of nostalgia in his tone.

"Those were good days," George says. The sentimentality of the statement is clear.

"They were all good days," Sapnap replies. A soft smile comes to his face. "Some of the best days of my life," he says. Dream puts his hand on Sapnap's shoulder, squeezing slightly. They watch the rest of the video, and a familiar warmth comes over them.

"I think that's a good place to end," Dream says once the video ends. "We've been recording for so long."

"My ass hurts from sitting too long," Sapnap complains, shifting slightly. Dream pushes him.

"Sapnap! Don't swear," Dream says. "I want this video to be monetized."

"My butt hurts," Sapnap says. Dream rolls his eyes.

"Better," Dream says. He goes back to addressing the camera. "I just want to say, thank you all so much for your support, it means a lot." Dream gets teary for a bit, and Sapnap reaches over to put a hand on his shoulder. "It's crazy to think how far we've come. Even though the Dream Team is officially disbanded, all of these videos will always hold a special place in my heart."

"Bye guys," George says, waving both of his hands at the camera, "this was super fun."

"I love you all," Sapnap says. He can't fight the sentimental value of his words. "Thank you so much for all you've done. I genuinely look back at that time as some of the best days of my life."

Dream smiles, wiping his eyes. He gets up to stop recording.

"That was fun," Dream says, once he shuts the camera off.

"Yeah, it was actually," George says. "It's kind of nice to see how far we've come."

"It made me feel kind of old," Sapnap says, "so I can't imagine how you two feel. Ancient, probably."

"You're only two years younger than me," Dream says.

"Still," Sapnap replies. There's a beat.

"This was nice," George says.

"I meant it," Sapnap says. Dream and George look at him. "When I said that they were all good days."

"Yeah," George says. "They were." Dream smiles, reminiscing. A comfortable silence falls upon them.

Chapter End Notes

Hello!!! <3 This chapter is super long haha. I hope you enjoy, if you do, make sure to

let me know!!

Big shout-out to everyone who leaves comments -- y'all are so lovely, you make me smile so much :) I check my inbox obsessively now because you all are so amazing!!

If you like this fic, feel free to recommend it -- I always love seeing new people comment, it makes my day!! Love you all <3

Of Course I'm Proud of You

Chapter Summary

George looks up and blows the smoke into the air. "Yeah, of course," he says. Sapnap smiles softly at his tone. "Of course I'm proud of you."

"I ran away, basically," Sapnap responds, looking away. "This was my dream, and I left it behind."

"You didn't," says George. "You grew up. Found a new dream."

Chapter Notes

"You were a dream. Then a reality. Now a memory." -- Iain S. Thomas, I Wrote This for You

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After they filmed their video, Dream had excused himself to tend to some business. He had some meetings to attend, and some emails to answer. He had been putting them off for a few days, he had explained to Sapnap and George, but he really needed to tend to them. They understood, of course -- they both knew what it was like to have an influencer job. Constant communication was key.

"Just give me two hours," Dream had said to them. "Then we can eat dinner together and watch a movie or something."

"As long as I can cook, you can have as long as you need," Sapnap had replied. "George and I can entertain ourselves for a bit." He had snaked his arm around George's shoulder. George had rolled his eyes, but let Sapnap lean against him.

"That's alright," George had said. "We can find something to do."

"Do you want to smoke?" Sapnap had asked. He knew Dream didn't like to smoke, but George would occasionally smoke with him. George had looked at him, but his eyes darted to Dream for a second.

"As long as Dream's okay with it," George had said. It was his house, after all.

"Do it outside," Dream had responded. He looked at Sapnap, then at George. His eyes softened, and he smiled at them. "I don't mind."

"Of course," Sapnap had said. "I'm going to get my backpack, then we can go to the truck?" George agreed, slipping out from under Sapnap's arm.

That's where they sat now: in the back of Sapnap's truck, smoking. It was dark out, but there was enough light coming from the house that they could see each other.

Sapnap took a hit off the joint. He let the smoke sit in his lungs as he handed the joint to George, who took it without hesitating. Sapnap tapped George on his shoulder, and when George turned to look at him, Sapnap made a grand show of blowing out some smoke rings.

"Wow, you're so cool," George says. He makes an exaggerated show of clapping, and Sapnap mock-bows. Sapnap watches as George takes a hit, coughs slightly, and blows out the smoke. He smiles.

"I feel so nostalgic right now," George says. "Watching all of that stuff was super weird."

"It is weird," Sapnap agrees. "Sometimes I think back to myself from back then and it feels like a different person. I can barely recognize myself." He reaches his hand out to take the joint from George, who hands it over. Sapnap takes another hit as George responds.

"I think that's part of growing as a person," George replies. Sapnap laughs softly and shakes his head, letting the smoke come out of his mouth and curl around them. He hands George the joint.

"Sometimes I wonder if my younger self would be proud of me," Sapnap says. He doesn't look at George when he speaks. The next thing he says comes out quieter, more sincere. "There are times where I know that he wouldn't."

George holds the joint lazily between two fingers. He looks at Sapnap, who doesn't return his gaze, although he feels George's stare. "I'm proud of you," George says. Sapnap looks at him, but George pays him no mind, instead taking another hit.

"Really?" Sapnap asks.

George looks up and blows the smoke into the air. "Yeah, of course," he says. Sapnap smiles softly at his tone. "Of course I'm proud of you."

"I ran away, basically," Sapnap responds, looking away. "This was my dream, and I left it behind."

"You didn't," says George. "You grew up. Found a new dream." Noticing how Sapnap looks away at his words, George scoots over so they are sitting next to each other. Their shoulders are touching. George hands him the joint, and Sapnap takes it without looking.

"I'm proud of you and the person you've become," George says. Sapnap laughs at this, the sentimentality of it making him feel warm.

"Thank you Georgie," he says. "It means a lot." George smiles softly at this, and leans back. Sapnap watches him for a moment. They sit in a comfortable kind of quiet.

"You know," Sapnap says, feeling brave, "I think that I'm going to move back to Texas." George sits up at this.

"Really?" he asks. Sapnap can feel George looking at him, but he doesn't look back.

"Yeah," he says. "I've been travelling for what -- two and a half years? Three years?" Sapnap smiles softly. "I've seen so much of the world. It feels like time I have someplace to call home again."

It's something Sapnap had been thinking about for a while. The domesticity of their old house in Florida is what finally convinced him. Hearing George speak about the person he had become had cemented the decision.

"I've been looking at some apartments near my family," Sapnap continues, "but I haven't found somewhere yet." Sapnap looks up and meets George's eyes. George offers a smile. "It will be nice to be able to see my parents more often."

"When you're settled, could I come see you?" George asks. Sapnap takes another hit before answering. George watches the smoke, admiring as it curls around them.

"Of course," Sapnap says. He coughs, slightly. "You can always come see me."

"But now I know where you'll be," George says. His tone is a happy one, content. "You can't escape." Sapnap laughs at this.

"You still can't drive," he responds. George shrugs at this.

"Maybe it's time I learn," George says. He reaches for the joint. As he takes another hit, he listens as Sapnap speaks.

"I haven't told Dream yet," Sapnap says. "But I will soon. Do you think he'll let me stay here until I have everything figured out?"

"Yeah, of course," George says. "Even if he doesn't, you can always crash on my sofa for a while." Sapnap laughs at this, then takes another hit.

He closes his eyes, inhales, and lets the smoke sit in his lungs. Sapnap then opens his eyes, and blows rings into the air. George stares at the smoke, and they sit in silence for a moment longer before Sapnap speaks again.

"What are you going to do after this?" Sapnap says. George sombers slightly, at his tone. Sapnap notices the way his shoulders tense and the way the smile leaves his face.

There's a moment, George thinks, where you can feel happiness leave you.

"Same thing as before, I guess," George says. He sounds more hollow. Sapnap ponders over this answer, for a moment, before deciding to break everything down.

"You slept in Dream's room last night," Sapnap says matter-of-factly. It's not a question, it's a statement. George doesn't look at him when he responds.

"Yeah," George says.

"I'm pretty sure you're wearing one of his shirts," Sapnap continues. George is wearing a blue t-shirt, which is ever so slightly too large on him. Most people wouldn't have looked twice.

"Yeah," George says. His tone is even.

"You're happy," Sapnap says, and it feels like the truest thing he's said in a while. George is quieter for longer, after this, but responds nonetheless.

"Yeah," George responds, looking down, avoiding Sapnap's gaze. The truth of this answer makes him ache, slightly.

"You're in love with Dream?" Sapnap asks. He knows the answer to this question, but he's not sure if George does. Sapnap hears George inhale deeply, seemingly weighing over the question. After a bit, he responds.

"I was," George says. Sapnap looks over at him. George doesn't seem sad, but does seem to be

deep in thought. Sapnap can tell George is biting the inside of his cheek -- a nervous habit he never outgrew. Sapnap clears his throat, and George looks up at him, and offers a sad smile. "Then I wasn't."

"You are," Sapnap says.

"I can't be," George says. "It's been so long since we were like that."

"Like what?" Sapnap asks.

"Together," George says. "Easy." Sapnap looks at George, and he is sure that George can tell he doesn't believe him.

"It would be too difficult now," George continues, looking away. "I don't think he would want that anymore." Sapnap gives a soft smile at this.

"Want what? You?" George nods. "He does," Sapnap says, but George looks unconvinced.

"If it was meant to work out, it would have worked out," George says, simply. Sapnap feels the hurt in this statement, but what hurts him more is the blatant acceptance within it. "I wouldn't want to try to do anything again unless we were one hundred percent certain it would work." When Sapnap doesn't respond, George continues.

"Plus, I don't know if Dream wants that." Sapnap almost laughs at this statement. Instead, he shakes his head and takes another hit. He blows the smoke towards George, who scrunches his nose at the way it tickles.

"Ask me to tell you something true," Sapnap says, handing George the joint. George gives him a questioning look, but obliges.

"Tell me something that's true," George says. He takes another hit from the joint. Sapnap takes a deep breath before starting.

"I think you two could work it out," Sapnap says. "I think it was a matter of needing to grow a little bit." George doesn't respond to this, but hands Sapnap the joint. Sapnap takes a hit, then looks upwards and blows the smoke into the sky. At George's silence, he continues.

"You two were such a big part of each other's lives for so long that you didn't know how to be apart. It was more of a need to be close to each other, instead of a choice to be close," Sapnap continues. "But now you know how to be alone, so you can actually make the choice not to be."

"I don't think you get to love like that again," George says. "The intense kind of love. I think that's reserved for teenagers." He sighs. "For people who haven't become who they're meant to be yet."

"Do you think you've become who you're meant to be?" Sapnap asks.

George thinks for a while before responding.

"Yeah," he says. "I think I have."

"What changed?" Sapnap asks.

"Me, I guess," George says. "I think more things through now. Have more of a routine. I'm sadder, sometimes, but I think I've accepted that that kind of love doesn't exist for me anymore."

"It's a different kind of love, but it's still love," Sapnap says. "This is the happiest I've seen you in a

very long time."

George smiles at this. "I am happy Sapnap," he says.

"Then don't take it away," Sapnap says. George sighs at this statement. Sapnap thinks for a moment, but realizes there is nothing more he could say to convince him.

"I've said what I needed to," Sapnap continues. "It's your choice, but this is me letting you know: you two could make it work if you tried." George doesn't look back at him, but Sapnap can see he looks deep in thought. Sapnap taps his shoulder, and offers the joint when George turns to look at him. George holds his hand up, declining the offer. Sapnap shrugs and puts it out, leaving it in the bed of his truck.

"We should head back in," George says, moving to get out. "Dream should probably be done with his meetings soon."

It's not the first time Dream has lied to George and Sapnap. But it's the first time in a while he's felt this guilty over it.

Dream sighs, then leans back in his chair and rubs his eyes.

This house has so many memories, but they don't belong to him anymore. That feeling -- the nostalgic, youthful sort of joy -- has long since gone. Now, all that remained was empty rooms and more space than Dream knew what to do with.

It wasn't like he needed their permission to sell the house. It was his -- it was always his house. When they had lived here, they had paid him rent, rather than buying the house together. They reasoned that this would be the best financial decision. It was his house when they first moved in, and it was his house still. Of course, there was still a part of him that thought of it as their house, but he needed to move on.

Dream reread the email he had been meaning to send to the realtor company. It had all the basic info, as well as multiple photos showing the interior of the house. Once he sent this email, it would be final: his house would be on the market.

Dream didn't need their permission to sell the house, but he can't help but feel like he is slightly betraying them when he hits send. *It's time to move on*, he thinks. From a practicality standpoint, Dream probably should have moved out a long time ago. There was too much space for just one person.

He hears Sapnap and George come in through the front door. Their voices are faint, but still there. Dream smiles to himself, then stands up, closing his laptop. *Let yourself enjoy this*, he thinks. *When the morning comes, it will be time to move on, but I will let myself enjoy this for now.*

Chapter End Notes

hello!!!

the next update might take a little longer because i want to outline all of the rest of the chapters and make sure everything flows well :) since it will take longer, if anyone's

curious, the next chapter title is: I Want You.

thank you so much for all of your support!!! if you like the story, let me know by leaving kudos or a comment :) i love hearing from all of you, and i respond to all comments (eventually). <3 <3 <3

I Want You

Chapter Summary

"I want you," George says. Dream feels his heart sink at the admission, even more so with how heartfelt George sounded. "No matter what, I want you. Even if I can't have you like that anymore." There's a hollow feeling in Dream's chest that aches in a way he doesn't know how to describe.

I can't have you like that anymore. Later, Dream would think about this sentence, turn it over in his head, think of all the ways that it was true and how much he wanted it to be false.

"You have me," Dream replies, stroking his hair. "All of me." He puts his hand on George's cheek, tilting his head upwards until he is looking into his eyes. "Now I've told you, so now you know." He rubs his thumb on George's cheek.

Chapter Notes

"And in the end, I will break the stars and resurrect the sun." -- Iain S. Thomas, I Wrote This for You

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

There was a poem that Dream had read, a long time ago. Occasionally, lines from it would pop into his head. One of them does, as he walks down the stairs to meet Sapnap and George. It's as follows: *my quiet love was yours from the beginning.*

The first time he met George in person, it was like a realization. Like finding something you hadn't even realized you had lost yet, gaining something you didn't even realize you were looking for. When they saw each other at the airport, it took two seconds for Dream to wrap his arms around George. *Oh there you are*, Dream had thought. *I've been waiting for this.*

He had felt George stiffen in his grasp, but soon he relaxed, allowing Dream to pull him closer. George had clung to him, back then; Dream could still remember the feeling of George's hands gripping the fabric at the back of his hoodie. He relished in it, being able to hold him so close that no one could ever take him away. Physical proof he was real.

It went like this: Dream held George for the first time, and he had two very important realizations.

The first: *I love you in the way that makes me want to be able to hold you all the time.*

The second: *it's okay if you don't love me, as long as I can hold you like this.*

Dream thinks of this as he walks down the stairs, following the sound of George and Sapnap's voices. He keeps these realizations in the back of his mind, holding them close. The bitterness of the memory burns him, but he holds on to them. Later, he would realize that this was part of the

problem.

George walks up to Dream as soon as he walks into the room. He put his head on Dream's chest, and Dream didn't think before wrapping his arms around him. He let himself rest his chin on George's head while talking to Sapnap.

"Do you want chicken?" Sapnap asks. Dream hums, thinking for a moment, then shrugs.

"I don't care," Dream says. George shifts to wrap his arms around Dream. "Do you care, George?" George hums into his chest, and it tickles a bit. Dream chuckles. "I think that's a no."

"We have leftover mashed potatoes and vegetables," Sapnap says. "I can fry some chicken."

Dream's mouth waters slightly at the prospect. The pancakes they had eaten were a few hours ago; he hadn't realized how hungry he was.

"That sounds amazing," Dream says. Sapnap gives a thumbs up. His eyes dart down towards where George still has his face buried in Dream's shirt.

"He gets a little clingy whenever we smoke," Sapnap says. The fond tone in his voice is unmistakable. He smiles, and reaches his hand out to ruffle George's hair.

"Yeah," Dream says, rubbing circles into George's back. Sapnap gives him a look that is either pity or judgement.

"I'm going to go do that," Sapnap says. He turns and walks to the kitchen. "You two just don't spoil your dinner, alright?" Dream rolls his eyes.

"Okay *Mom*," he says to Sapnap's back. He attempts to untangle himself from George, but George clings tighter, making Dream laugh.

"You gotta let go of me," Dream says. George refuses.

"No," he says. The words are muffled by Dream's shirt. Dream can't keep the smile off his face.

"Let's go to the couch, at least," he says. George grumbles, but begrudgingly lets Dream move away from him. Dream leads them towards the couch, then takes a seat. George sits next to him, immediately resting his head on Dream's shoulder. Dream smiles at this, placing an arm around him.

"We should clean that up," Dream says, gesturing vaguely to the side of the room. George followed his gaze. They had shoved all of the boxes and various things from the PO box to the side so that they could film.

George gets up, walks over to the pile, grabs a bag, and goes back to settle on the couch. Dream recognizes it as the package of strawberry marshmallows they had opened earlier. He gives George a questioning look.

"I'm helping," George says, then puts a marshmallow in his mouth. Dream gives him a look. "This is cleaning," George emphasizes, taking another marshmallow from the bag. Dream takes the bag from him and puts it to the side, ignoring George's protests.

"We're going to eat dinner soon," Dream reminds him. "Sapnap will kill you if you spoil your

dinner off of marshmallows." George pouts at this, then tries to reach over Dream to get the bag.

"Hey," Dream says, moving in front of George to stop him. "No, you can wait." George frowns, but moves back. He looks at the marshmallow in his hand, then holds it up to Dream.

"Eat it," George says, in a way that Dream finds absolutely endearing. George looks up at him, and Dream can see that his eyes are a little red from smoking. There is determination behind George's gaze, which makes his heart melt a little bit.

Dream rolls his eyes, but takes the marshmallow from George and eats it. George moves his hand back, seemingly satisfied.

"Can we cuddle?" he asks. Dream laughs at the question, but opens his arms and leans back. George wastes no time and leans in, letting Dream shift so that they are laying down. Dream rests his hands on George, one flat against his back and the other playing with his hair.

George's hair smells like smoke. Dream runs his fingers through it anyways, and George hums, content at the touch.

"You're so clingy," Dream says teasingly. He presses his cheek against the top of George's head.

What he's not expecting is to feel George stiffen at his words, and he is entirely unprepared when he hears a shaky sigh. Dream moves to look down at him, and sees that George is staring into the distance, biting his cheek.

"Hey," Dream says softly. He runs his fingers through George's hair again, willing him to look up. George stubbornly looks away.

"I'm sorry," George says, still not looking. George doesn't give him a chance to respond before continuing. "For being clingy." Dream feels his heart drop at his sad tone.

"Hey, it's okay," Dream says. He moves his hand to George's cheek, willing him to meet his gaze. "I didn't mean it like that." His tone is softer, gentle. George offers him a smile, but his eyes are sad. After a moment, George looks away, seemingly phased by Dream's gaze. Dream frowns at this.

"I like that you're clingy," Dream says, staring at the ceiling. He tangles his fingers in George's hair, holding him close. George relaxes, slightly. "I love you," Dream says. They are so close that if Dream focuses hard enough, he can feel George's heartbeat. He finds comfort in the way he can feel George breathe.

Dream is definitely not expecting what George says next.

"I love you too," George says. He's quiet, and Dream can barely hear him. Dream feels his brain malfunction.

He feels George take a deep breath before he speaks again. "I love you, Dream."

He's absolutely certain that George can feel the way his breath hitched at the admission, how his pulse increased, and the heat radiating off of his cheeks. Dream is completely flustered, undone at George's admission. George let out a soft giggle, and Dream feels himself melt at the way George snuggles into his chest.

It went like this: Dream hears George say I love you for the first time in person, and he has two very important realizations.

The first: *I'm in love with you in the way that makes me want to hold you all the time. I thought that I wasn't, but I definitely am very much in love with you.*

The second: *George loves me, but is not in love with me, and this is one of the last nights I'll be able to hold him like this.*

The first realization builds him up. The second one shatters everything. He tries to push the sadness away, but it doesn't work. These realizations stay with him, echoing in his mind. Dream feels an overwhelming dread, knowing that this would all end. *I finally have you*, Dream thinks, *but it's not enough.*

Dream sighs, then slides one of his hands under George's shirt, making George squirm at the contact. "Your hands are cold," George says, whining.

Dream smiles at this. "You're keeping me warm," he says, reveling at the way he sees George's cheeks flush. He traces circles on George's skin, allowing himself to enjoy this.

There's a third realization that Dream makes in this moment, one that he wouldn't fully understand until later. It's a simple thought, but it breaks him. Dream swallows, and pushes it away, willing himself to enjoy holding George for longer.

In the morning, I promise I will deal with this, Dream thinks. *But I need to give myself something good to hold on to.* He shifts, pulling George slightly higher up, and rests his cheek on George's hair.

The realization: *I cannot do this anymore.*

Dream would later come to think of this night as the last good night.

It starts like this: Sapnap calls him and George for dinner, and Dream has to coax George into getting up.

"Hey, let's go eat," he says, tapping on George's shoulder.

"I'm comfy," George says, moving to look up at Dream. His tone is giggly. Dream wants to keep him this way, happy, and touchy-feely. Dream smiles at him, but moves to sit up. George, seemingly protesting this, moves his arms so they are wrapped around Dream's waist, making Dream chuckle.

"Come on," Dream says, attempting to move back once more. George refuses, burying his face into Dream's shoulder. "I know you're hungry." He moves slightly back, making George look at him.

"Hey," he says. He puts his hand on George's cheek, making George flush. Dream, feeling brave, leans in. He feels George stiffen at this, and he nearly chuckles at that.

"Let's go," Dream whispers into George's ear. He then moves George off of his lap and gets up. When he looks down, he sees that George is red, biting his cheek and looking away. He feels a slight pang of guilt.

I love you, Dream thinks, *but if I kissed you I wouldn't be able to let you go.* When George makes no move to follow him, Dream looks back.

Just once, he thinks. He leans down and kisses George's forehead, before taking his hand and

helping him up. He revels in the soft smile George gives him, but when he turns away, he can feel the reality of everything setting in. Dream feels a soft pang in his heart, and it feels like hoping. It hurts.

They head towards the kitchen, where Sapnap has already set the table.

"You're wonderful," Dream says as he sits down. The sight of the food is mouth-watering. "This looks amazing." Sapnap laughs at this, taking a seat himself.

"You're doing the dishes," Sapnap says. Dream doesn't protest. Suddenly recalling something, he turns to George. "Hey George, I forgot to refill the cat bowls, could you do that?" George nods, turning to grab the food from the pantry. He goes to refill the cat bowls, much to the delight of Patches and his cat, who start eating almost immediately. George smiles at the sight, then goes to sit down.

"Your cat is clingy," Sapnap says. "She kept trying to get me to give her food while I was cooking." George rolls his eyes, and Dream smiles at this.

"George, you should give her a name," Dream remarks. "You could even just name her Cat, so you have something to call out when you want her to come to you." Dream takes a bite of his food. It is warm, and absolutely wonderful. He gives Sapnap a thumbs up, which makes him smile.

"I never need to call her," George says. "She's always close by." Dream laughs and shakes his head at this.

"I've taken to calling her Kitty," Sapnap says. He cuts his vegetables into smaller pieces, spearing a few with his fork.

"That's not too creative," George says.

"George, you literally didn't even name her," Dream says. "It doesn't get more uncreative than that." Sapnap laughs at this, while George pouts.

"I didn't know we were here to judge my pet owning skills," George says, exaggeratingly pouting.

"We're not, just eat," Sapnap says. "Do you need me to cut your food for you Georgie?" He gestures towards George's plate with his fork. George rolls his eyes, but picks up his fork and knife to eat. A comfortable silence falls upon them. After a moment, Sapnap speaks.

"Hey Dream," Sapnap says. Dream is slightly jarred by the caution in his tone. "Can I ask a favor?"

"What is it?" Dream asks, placing his fork down to look at Sapnap.

"Can I crash here for a while?" Sapnap asks. "I'll buy groceries and cook, even pay rent if you want."

Dream is taken aback by the question -- he hadn't expected this. Honestly, he thought that Sapnap would be headed out sometime this week. He never really stayed for long when he visited. At his shocked silence, Sapnap continues.

"I'm going to move back to Texas, but I need to figure the logistics of it out first," he explains. Dream can hear something nervous in his tone. "Apartment hunting, and whatnot."

Dream is surprised at this, but he is happy for Sapnap -- he seems to be excited to move back. Plus, having him around for longer is definitely something Dream wants.

"Of course," Dream says. He smiles at Sapnap. "Take as long as you need." Sapnap smiles at this, and they all continue eating. Here, Dream sees the opportunity to tell them both that he is selling the house. But he doesn't want to break the illusion just yet.

Tonight, he could pretend. It would probably take about two months before he found a buyer, anyways, leaving plenty of time for him to break the news. He still needed to figure out where he would be moving once that happened.

We could apartment hunt together, Dream thinks. The sentimentality of that thought makes him feel warm. *Sapnap probably needs furniture -- he could take some of the stuff from here, since I'll be moving someplace smaller.*

It would work out, Dream reasoned to himself. He pushes all of these thoughts away, willing himself to live in the moment. George says something that leaves Sapnap laughing, and Dream allows himself to smile. *In the morning, I will be brave*, Dream thinks. *In the morning.*

Later that night, when Dream is lying in bed with George, he thinks of that poem again. He had shown it to George, years ago. He didn't know if George remembered it, honestly. But it reminded Dream of him. One line echoed in his mind: *what I would give to be a sleeping body beside you.*

What I would give to have you like this, Dream thinks. George's hair smells like his shampoo, and he's wearing another one of Dream's shirts. *In my bed, in my shirt, in my arms.*

They are facing each other, but George's head is in the crook of Dream's neck, leaving Dream staring at the wall. Their legs are tangled, and Dream has one arm behind his head, under his pillow, while the other is resting on George's side.

"You're leaving in the morning," Dream says. It's a statement, not a question. His tone is hollow, and there is a resigned acceptance within it. There was a part of him that wanted to ask George to stay. But Dream knew better than to ask questions he already knew the answer to.

He had thought about this. George had a different life now -- he had a nine-to-five job and an apartment that was hours away. When Dream had picked up George a few days ago, it was a reminder: you have both moved on. You have both grown up.

But seeing George, being able to hold him close -- it was like forgetting. Dream let himself enjoy it, but there was too much familiarity there. Too much want. He had thought he had been past this. The last time they had slept under the same roof was years ago.

Dream hadn't expected anything, though he couldn't deny that there was a small part of him that wanted this. That first night, when George had asked if he would stay, Dream realized that there would always be a part of him that wanted this.

He takes a deep breath, reminding himself of where he was: in his bed, with George. George was leaving in the morning, and he would have to accept it.

"Ask me to tell you something true," George says softly, breaking Dream out of his train of thought. His voice is gentle in the dark room. Dream is caught off-guard by this phrase coming from George -- it was something that Sapnap said quite often.

In spite of the hollow feeling, Dream feels some sort of warmth in his chest at the thought of it -- George and Sapnap picking up each other's habits. There was something so wholesome about it. *We are learning from each other*, Dream thinks. *Even now*.

"Tell me something that's true," Dream says. He feels George take a deep breath before continuing.

"I want you," George says. Dream feels his heart sink at the admission, even more so with how heartfelt George sounded. "No matter what, I want you. Even if I can't have you like that anymore." There's a hollow feeling in Dream's chest that aches in a way he doesn't know how to describe.

I can't have you like that anymore. Later, Dream would think about this sentence, turn it over in his head, think of all the ways that it was true and how much he wanted it to be false.

"You have me," Dream replies, stroking his hair. "All of me." He puts his hand on George's cheek, tilting his head upwards until he is looking into his eyes. "Now I've told you, so now you know." He rubs his thumb on George's cheek.

George smiles, but it doesn't reach his eyes.

"I'm in love with you," Dream says. If this was the last night he could hold George like this, he would make it something precious. He would leave nothing left unsaid. There's so much vulnerable honesty in the statement, and it makes Dream ache.

George doesn't respond to this, instead leaning in closer to Dream. Dream lets this happen, and pulls him closer.

In the morning, he thinks, *this will be over. But for now, you are here*. Dream feels George fall asleep slowly, counts his even breaths as he stares at the wall. It's a while before Dream allows himself to close his eyes, to fall asleep. He wants to enjoy this for as long as possible, to leave one final warm memory.

In the morning, I will be brave, Dream thinks. He's only partially right.

Chapter End Notes

the poem that dream is thinking of is from achilles to patroclus by caitlyn siehl --
george thinks of a line from the same poem a few chapters ago :)

i hope that you enjoy this!!! let me know if you do by leaving a comment or some
kudos :)

the next chapter title is: it's always been you.

It's Always Been You

Chapter Summary

"You and your stupid smile. That fucking laugh. How it feels to wake up next to you in the morning," Dream lists these things, and it might as well be a goodbye. "Everything about you."

George says nothing through this, and Dream can't bring himself to look at him, take in his expression, feel the same sting he did the first time George had left.

"It's always been you," Dream says, and it breaks him. "But it can't be anymore." He feels hollow, like there is nothing left anymore.

Chapter Notes

"I think I could have loved you better than anyone, and I can't stop making lists of all the times I almost told you that." -- Caitlyn Siehl

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sometimes, Dream wakes up crying.

He opens his eyes and finds that his cheeks are wet. Usually when this happens, he wakes up before the sun has risen.

There's a certain sadness in the darkness of the morning, right before the sun comes up, the last moments of the night. These mornings, he doesn't usually remember his dreams. He just has the fleeting feeling of something being lost.

Dream takes a breath and sits up. He rubs his arm across his face, catching the stray tears on his cheeks. He looks to the side and sees George, curled up, still asleep. In the dim light of the room, Dream can only make out the silhouette of the sleeping boy, but he still feels a familiar pang in his heart. He reaches over, about to place his hand on George's cheek, but stops himself.

George looks so peaceful when he's sleeping. It makes Dream sad, but he's never able to pinpoint why. What he wants to do is reach over, run his fingers through George's hair. To lie back down and hold him so close that he can never be taken away.

Instead, he moves to grab his phone from the bedside table, and slightly fumbles it. He squints at the light when he checks the time: it is nearly 6 AM. He sighs, putting the phone down.

It's the morning, he thinks, cynically. *I let myself enjoy it. Time to move on.* Dream moves out of the bed, taking care not to wake George up. He stands, and stretches.

This is what brave feels like, he thinks.

He could let the hurt consume him. Dream's sadness was hot: it burned with want. He had an

intense need to fix things, most of the time. When he couldn't, it destroyed him. He knows this. He's known this for the past two years.

He also knows this: when he can't fix things, he breaks.

The last time that George had left, he did not come back. Dream had been desperate then. He said so many things, tried so many ways to convince him to stay. He had thought they could make it work, even if George didn't want to make content anymore, they could find a way.

In hindsight, Dream knew George had made the right choice. He needed to move on, grow up a little bit. Be alone, for the first time in a while. Dream didn't need George there.

But he wanted him there. He had never felt that kind of want before -- the desperate, burning kind. It destroyed him.

Dream closes his eyes, and takes a breath. When he opens them, he looks at George once more. When Dream turns away, he knows: he has given up. It's a numb feeling.

Most of the time, George wakes up alone.

He expects this, usually. He wakes up alone in his bed, and stares at the ceiling until he needs to get up.

Usually, George wakes up before the sun rises. He watches as the light slowly starts coming through the space between his blinds, how it lets him see the colored scribbles on the wall. It's comforting, in a way. But sometimes, it felt so terribly lonely.

But he wakes up, and for a moment, he forgets where he is. George feels the same lonely feeling, but it's not familiar. He wakes up, and feels as though something has been lost. George takes a deep breath, and it smells like Dream, but he is alone.

The side of the bed that Dream had occupied is empty. George reaches his arm towards it, as if he could physically feel something in the space that Dream had left behind.

George turns over and lies on his back. He can vaguely hear the sound of the shower turning on. Dream liked showering in the mornings. George could pretend that nothing had changed, right now. That Dream wasn't getting prepared to drop him off. He could close his eyes, go back to sleep, and will himself not to think about anything. But he doesn't. Instead, he stares at the ceiling, which is not his own, but is still very familiar.

George's sadness is cold. It's numb. It's avoidance: a hollow need to forget everything. To do the bare minimum, and pretend that nothing mattered. Pretend that nothing ever hurt.

When you care about someone, it creates an obligation: let them know that you care about them, and let them care about you. George knows this, but he's thrown it away. He threw it away a long time ago, but never stopped missing it.

I'm leaving soon, George thinks. There's no reason that he would come back here anytime soon. I didn't think I'd end up coming back here, the last time I left.

George thinks about two years ago, when he had moved out. It was difficult. Dream tried so many things to convince him to stay, but George knew he needed to leave. *I needed to grow up*, he thinks.

The night he left, they had slept in the same bed, but Dream didn't touch him. They both laid on their backs, staring at this ceiling, talking but not looking at each other.

I don't think we can work, George had said. *I don't want to lose you if we keep trying and it doesn't work*, he had thought.

If you loved me, we could make it work, Dream had answered. There was so much desperation in his tone. *I love you, do you love me?* The question was straight to the point. Honest to a fault.

Don't ask questions you don't know the answer to, he had thought. In the present, George wonders what would have happened if he had said this. If he had left the answer up to interpretation. Dream had to have known. There was no one else who knew him better.

George had almost been honest. He had almost said yes, but he knew that to confess that would mean to stay.

It was cruel of Dream to ask that. He knew what he was doing. George could hear the hurt in his voice, thinly veiled behind anger. George was logical. He knew that he needed to move on from YouTube, from being a persona. He had started to resent it all, everything.

George knew if he had told the truth, he wouldn't have been able to leave.

No, George had said. *I can't*. He felt like he was trying to convince himself.

George takes a breath. He hears the shower turn off -- Dream should be ready soon. They had agreed on driving back early in the morning. Dream was paranoid about falling asleep at the wheel, that was part of it. But there was another, unspoken part.

Rip the band-aid off, George thinks. He sits up, turning to get out of bed. Before he leaves, he glances at the sheets. *There's no reason for me to come back here*, he thinks.

He ignores the physical ache in his chest.

They leave before Sapnap gets up. George has to quietly sneak into his room to collect his cat, who is annoyed to have been woken up so early. As he walks out of the room, cat in hand, he makes a mental note to call Sapnap more often. Seeing Sapnap again reminded George how much he missed his company.

George makes his way downstairs, being careful not to disturb the cat too much. When he gets to the bottom, he stops to scratch behind her ears. She meows at him, before settling in his arms. He recalls what Sapnap had said the night before: *I've taken to calling her Kitty*.

"Kitty, huh?" George says. She meows, quietly. He smiles.

Dream is waiting by the front door, and George's duffel bag is at his feet. George walks over, and with arm cradling the cat, he grabs the bag off the floor and slings it over his shoulder.

"Ready?" Dream asks. George takes a breath, looking around. *I don't want to leave*, he thinks.

He offers Dream a smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes, and gestures towards the door. Dream opens it, and they head out.

Something changes in the drive back. George knows it. He can feel it in the hollow conversation. He feels the familiar dread rising in his chest.

They are sitting less than two feet apart, but somehow George feels like they've never been farther. He tries to make conversation, but it feels polite, forced.

Hollow, he thinks. *Fake, maybe*. His lungs feel tight. *I don't know*. For a moment, he feels lightheaded, and he is sure he has never felt this alone.

It takes another hollow response for George to think of the stars again.

Do you ever think of the stars? How far apart they are? The words he had spoken so long ago echo in his head. The closest thing that he could call a confession.

George stares out the window, eyes fixed upon the horizon. He thinks about last night -- how he had told Dream that he loved him. He recalls Dream's flustered expression, how he could feel how fast his heart was beating.

This morning, Dream had barely looked at him. He kept a distance between them -- both physically and emotionally.

"We were something incredible once, weren't we?" George says. He glances over at Dream, who doesn't look back at him. Dream hums, but it is curt. A simple acknowledgement that George had said something. George thinks he might have preferred it if Dream didn't acknowledge it at all. He feels his cheeks flush at the lack of verbal response, and turns back towards the window.

It's not so much a question as it is reaching. The memory of leaving was bitter. George is reaching, hoping that something can push away the hollow feeling. That even though everything was different, there were some things that could be the same.

Sure, he was headed back to his own apartment, just as he had years ago. But this time, Dream was with him, and George made the conscious effort to not push him away. *I've grown up*, George thinks. *This is what trying feels like*.

Dream leaves George's question hanging in the air. George tries not to let it bother him. *It was more of a rhetorical question*, he rationalizes. *It's a lot to think about*.

He doesn't speak for the rest of the drive, instead resting his head on the window, willing himself to feel nothing.

Dream pulls up in front of George's apartment complex. George shifts, gathering his things, moving to throw his bag over his shoulder and cradling his cat in his arms. He is about to get out, but he falters. *One last chance*, he thinks. He turns back, and asks Dream a question.

"Do you want to come in for a bit?" George asks. Dream visibly falters at this, and George wonders if it was a good idea to ask. He sees the way that Dream's shoulders tighten, how his breathing hitched for a moment. This was it -- a hail mary, a final chance. Once he stepped out of this car, the weekend would be over, and there would be no reason to see Dream again for a long time.

Dream is quiet for an uncomfortable amount of time. George bites the inside of his cheek so hard it feels raw.

"I can't," Dream says finally. The answer hurts, and George tries not to let it show on his face. He feels Dream look at him, then look away. "I won't be able to leave you if I do." There's so much honesty in this statement, George can feel it. Dream's tone is strained, as if the words themselves

hurt him.

"That's alright," George says. He offers Dream a smile, but Dream does not return it. George feels the grin slowly slide off his face. He bites the inside of his cheek and turns away from Dream. There's a certain ache in his chest that does not go away. George pushes the feeling away, and says his next words without thinking.

"There's a moment where you can feel happiness leave you," he says. He lets the statement hang in the air, the meaning of it lingering in the empty space between them.

Dream doesn't respond to this, and George feels the weight of his words crushing in his chest. It's suffocating. The silence in the car is dense.

After a moment, he speaks again. "I'll see you, Dream." He tries not to let the sadness seep into his words, but he knows there is some resentment in his tone. George turns to leave, but Dream stops him.

"Wait," Dream says, as George is about to open the door. George turns to him and meets his eyes, offering a polite but forced smile, but Dream turns away, shutting his eyes and taking a deep breath. Sappnap's words echo in Dream's ears. *Let yourself enjoy it.* But what happens when it's all over? When there's nothing left?

"I need to say this now, because if I don't, I never will," Dream says. That night, the first time George left him, his hurt was hot. It burned him from the inside. He had called George so many times, and George had ignored all of them. *It's over*, he had thought, watching his call get rejected for the third time. It hurt. There were so many things Dream had wanted to say -- so many things he didn't get to say.

Dream feels the words spilling out before he can think about the consequences. "You're not coming back, are you?" He gives George no time to respond before continuing. "I can't keep doing this."

"I loved you so much. Sometimes, I still think I do. But I don't think I know how to love like that anymore." Dream lets the words spill out, ignoring how much they hurt to say out loud. *This is what brave feels like*, he tells himself.

George swallows thickly. "Like what?" he asks. His tone is even. Dream inhales shakily.

"Recklessly," he says. "Trusting." He spits the word out, and there's so much bitterness in his tone, and part of him knows it's cruel to say all of this. But he has to -- it would hurt more to leave it left unsaid. "Like no one would ever get hurt."

"God I -- I was so in love with you I didn't know how to function without you," Dream closes his eyes at this, his cheeks burning with something that almost feels like shame. He hears George exhale shakily.

Dream feels like crying, but doesn't think he would be able to, even if he tried. It's a dry sort of sadness, a familiar one. He makes a sound that almost sounds like a sob.

"I know," George whispers, and he sounds broken. Dream hadn't heard him sound like that in years. "This isn't my life anymore." George sounds like trying to convince himself. He takes a breath before continuing. "But maybe it could be."

Dream stares straight ahead, gripping the steering wheel so tightly his knuckles turn white. "No, it couldn't. Don't do this to me." Some part of Dream thinks that he sounds too much like he is longing. It hurts. George goes silent at this.

"I keep reaching. I keep hoping that maybe you'll come back to me. But you won't," Dream says. "I thought I didn't love you anymore. But then I see you again and all I want to do is fuck everything up."

I love you, I love you, I love you, Dream thinks. He's almost hyperventilating now, his chest feels tight. He leans forward, places his forehead on the steering wheel. He takes a few deep breaths, calming himself.

"You and your stupid smile. That fucking laugh. How it feels to wake up next to you in the morning," Dream lists these things, and it might as well be a goodbye. "Everything about you."

George says nothing through this, and Dream can't bring himself to look at him, take in his expression, feel the same sting he did the first time George had left.

"It's always been you," Dream says, and it breaks him. "But it can't be anymore." He feels hollow, like there is nothing left anymore. He doesn't look at George, but straightens up, lifting his head off the wheel.

"I can't do this anymore," Dream says. He can't keep reaching, not knowing if George will respond. He can't keep hoping. Dream stares straight ahead, waiting for a response. It's a long, weighted silence before Dream realizes he isn't getting one.

"I've said what I needed to," Dream says, and he is sure George can hear how broken he sounds. "There's nothing left for me to say anymore." He laughs, but it is hollow. He doesn't look up. George is silent. After a while, he hears the car door opening, then closing.

Dream sits there for a while before he drives away.

Chapter End Notes

thank you so much for reading!!!

i hope that you enjoy, if you do, please leave me a comment -- it makes my day to see that inbox notification!! <3

next chapter focused on sapnap and dream :) no title for it yet though, but should be up by the end of this week at most :)

I Need to Know That You're Okay

Chapter Summary

"You're in love with George," Sapnap says. Start with something true, he thinks.

"I don't want to talk about this," Dream says. He turns slightly away.

"You can't do this," Sapnap replies. He scoots closer to Dream. "I need to know that you're okay," he says.

"I'm okay," Dream says, in a tone that is definitely not okay.

"Bullshit," Sapnap says.

Chapter Notes

"I will go to my grave with the memory of the bravery in my bones" -- Caitlyn Siehl

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

George tries to call Dream less than two hours after Dream had dropped him off. Dream is still driving at this point.

He must know I'm driving, Dream thinks, pointedly ignoring the buzzing of his phone. Eventually, it stops, and it is quiet again. Dream lets out a sigh, and he doesn't know if it is from relief or disappointment.

It's another hour before George tries to call again. Dream doesn't pick up, because he's still driving, but part of him knows that he wouldn't answer anyways. He grits his teeth and stares straight ahead, willing himself to not think of George. It doesn't work.

The most cynical part of him wants to believe that George is toying with him. *Call me when I can't answer, and then you can pretend that you tried.* Dream takes a deep breath. *Couldn't talk to me when I was right in front of you.*

That's not fair, he reasons. *You know better than that.* This weekend was the most content he had been in a while. Dream hadn't realized how much of his time he actually spent alone. Waking up then immediately having company was absolutely lovely. It gave him a warm feeling.

Sapnap was still there, of course. *He's going to leave too*, Dream thinks as he switches lanes on the highway. *Then I'll move out, then it will be over.*

In truth, everything had been over for a while. But staying in the same place, having everything be almost the same for a few days -- it gave Dream a hoping feeling that he knew was unrealistic.

I'll leave, Dream thinks, *then it will be over.* His phone buzzes once more, and he glances over, seeing that he has one text from George. He stares back at the road, and grips the steering wheel so

hard that his knuckles turn white.

When Dream pulls into his driveway, he gets one more call from George. He puts the car into park, then turns to pick up his phone. For a moment, his thumb hovers over the answer call button.

What Dream wants to do is answer it. To hear what George needs to say so desperately.

I should apologize, he thinks. I was mean.

It was the truth, though, he argues with himself. It was brave. I needed to say it.

That's the problem: saying all of those things out loud was brave. Dream wasn't wrong. What he doesn't realize is that he's only been partially brave.

Saying everything he needed to say was brave. Leaving was not.

Dream lets the phone keep ringing until it stops. He shuts it off, not reading George's text. He lets himself sit in the car for a while before he heads inside.

Sapnap knows something is wrong when Dream walks in.

Honestly, he didn't think that Dream would be home this early -- he thought that he might spend some time at George's place. He glances at his phone -- it's only 5 PM, and he expected Dream to get back at 8 PM, earliest.

Dream doesn't so much as glance at Sapnap as he walks past, instead heading straight up to his room. Sapnap listens to his footsteps as they march up the stairs.

For a moment, Sapnap is content to let Dream come to him when Dream feels like it. He stays on the couch, scrolling through emails on his laptop. After a while, he sighs, then shuts his laptop. He looks in the direction of the stairs.

Sapnap goes to the kitchen and grabs a water bottle. He walks up to Dream's room, and takes a deep breath before he knocks, not entirely sure what he will find.

There's a moment when you can feel happiness leave you. George's words echo in his mind as Dream stares at the ceiling. His cheeks are wet.

I know that moment, Dream thinks. It's you, always you.

It's George when he leaves without turning back. It's walls of unread texts. It's unanswered phone calls, hollow answers. It's George's voice, sometimes, when he does pick up the phone.

It exists in the empty, in the lacking. It's the empty space in his bed. How he had slept in George's room for two weeks after he left the first time, because his sheets smelled like him. It's how he had kept that door open, because if it were closed, it would be too easy to pretend that George was still here.

I gave up on you, Dream thinks. That's the moment. For the first time that evening, he glances over at the empty space to his left, where George had slept.

His brows furrow when he notices something green just barely peeking out from under the blanket.

He reaches over, pulling out his old shirt, the one that George had slept in last night. Dream sits up, staring at the fabric in his hand.

I don't think I can wear this again, he thinks. Before he realizes what he is doing, he brings the fabric closer, inhaling deeply. *It smells like him*. For a moment, he forgets that George isn't coming back. He closes his eyes, clutching the fabric, and inhales once more. *It's always you*.

Dream opens his eyes, and the reality of everything sets in. He had given up on George -- or he's trying to. He throws the shirt as far away on the floor as he can, then lets himself fall back onto the bed, staring at the ceiling once more.

Fuck this, he thinks. *Fuck this. Fuck you. Fuck everything*.

Dream is startled from his thoughts when he hears a knock on the door. When he opens it, Sapnap gives him a concerned look.

Dream winces when he realizes what he must look like. He's been crying. He turns to the side, haphazardly wiping his tears with the back of his hand.

"Did you eat today?" Sapnap asks. Dream feels a certain pang in his heart at the concern in Sapnap's voice.

"No," Dream says. He moves aside, letting Sapnap walk into the room before he shuts the door.

"Drink," Sapnap says, holding out the water bottle. Dream takes it. Sapnap watches as he drinks half the bottle.

"What happened?" Sapnap asks. Dream stiffens at the question.

"I told George a lot of things," Dream says.

"What did you tell him?" he asks.

"Everything I needed to," Dream responds.

"What is everything?" Sapnap asked. He's pushing, he knows, and maybe he shouldn't be, but he needs to know.

Dream leaves his question hanging. He's about to go sit on his bed, but when he sees the way the blankets were bunched on the left side, where George had slept, he feels sick. Instead, he takes a seat on the floor. Sapnap gives him a look that feels like a mix of concern and confusion. Dream looks away.

Sapnap takes a seat next to Dream. They sit on the floor in silence for a moment. When Dream speaks again, his tone is hollow.

"I'm selling the house, Sapnap," Dream says. Sapnap looks at him, but Dream refuses to meet his eyes. "And as soon as the collab is posted, I'm announcing I'm taking a break from everything." Sapnap is quiet for a moment, processing the information.

"Is that what you want?" Sapnap asks, cautiously. The realization that this would probably be the last time that he would be staying in this house is bittersweet, but that feeling is quickly overshadowed by concern.

Dream, in short, looks like a wreck. His eyes are red from crying, and he looks like he didn't sleep

last night. He looks miserable. Heartbroken.

"If I didn't want to do it, I wouldn't have done it," Dream says. Sapnap hums, accepting this answer. After a beat, he asks another question.

"What's wrong, Dream?" Dream glances at him, briefly, and the look on his face tells Sapnap to drop the subject. Sapnap ignores this, swallowing the guilt and pushing more. "What happened?"

"Nothing important," Dream says.

"You're something important," Sapnap says. "George too," he adds on, after a moment. At the mention of his name, he sees Dream tense.

"What did George tell you?" Sapnap asks.

"Nothing," Dream says. He chuckles, but it's hollow. "He didn't say anything to me. He walked out and didn't say anything."

"Is that why you're upset?"

"Sapnap," Dream says, and it sounds like a warning. Sapnap ignores this, pushing more.

"You're in love with George," Sapnap says. *Start with something true*, he thinks.

"I don't want to talk about this," Dream says. He turns slightly away, as if the words themselves hurt him.

"You can't do this," Sapnap replies. He scoots closer to Dream. "I need to know that you're okay," he says.

"I'm okay," Dream says, in a tone that is definitely not okay.

"Bullshit," Sapnap says.

"I will be okay," Dream says. There's irritation in his tone.

"Tell me," Sapnap urges.

"There's nothing left to say," Dream says. He's stubborn, but Sapnap can tell he is growing irritated.

"There is," Sapnap says. "There's so much." He thinks, for a moment. "What did you say to George?"

"Sapnap stop-"

"No," Sapnap interrupts him. "You're not okay." He sees Dream grit his teeth at the statement.

"I don't want to-"

"I don't care. You need to tell me." Dream's fists clench, and his face looks slightly red. He closes his eyes, and takes a deep breath before answering.

"I don't need to do anything," Dream says, and there is clear anger in his tone.

"You're spiraling," Sapnap says.

"I'm angry, Sapnap," Dream says.

"Who are you angry at, Dream?" Sapnap asks.

"You," Dream says. Sapnap almost flinches at the harshness of his tone. "George." Dream's voice sounds like it almost breaks, and Sapnap is unsure if it's from sadness or anger.

"I don't think so," Sapnap says. "I think you're angry at yourself."

"Fuck off," Dream replies, anger clear in his tone. "I'm brave now. I'm not going to let myself hurt anymore."

"You love him," Sapnap says. He sees the way that he's pushing too far now. He knows that this is cruel. But it needs to be said. Dream grits his teeth before he answers.

"I don't," Dream spits the words out, but something falters. "I don't, Sapnap." His voice shakes, and Sapnap can't tell if it's from anger or sadness. "I can't keep hoping he'll come back when I know he won't." There's so much bitterness in his tone that Sapnap flinches.

"I want to be brave," Dream says. He laughs, and it is hollow. "The bravest thing I've done is to let it go." Dream is crying. He usually would cry when he got angry but this -- this was breaking him. Sapnap could see it. This has been eating away at him for years.

"Dream--"

"Fuck off, Sapnap," Dream shouts. His shoulders are shaking. "Fuck off," he shouts again, louder. He wants to scream. He's angry, so angry that he feels so much. He's angry that Sapnap can see right through him, that all his emotions are on his sleeve. *Take my heart, George, have it*, Dream thinks bitterly. *It's yours. Take it. Just take the hope and the memories too, and leave me with nothing. Let me feel nothing.*

Dream is jolted from his thoughts when he feels Sapnap put a hand on his shoulder. The touch is feather-light, barely there. For a moment, he wants to lash out, and scream. But something breaks inside him then. He crumbles. He hyperventilates, and Sapnap puts his arms around him.

"Breathe, Dream," he says. "Follow my breaths. Easy there." Dream struggles. He can feel Sapnap's exaggerated breaths, and counts them. *In, out. In, out.* Dream breathes, shakily, but then stronger.

"It's alright, I'm here," Sapnap says. Dream lets out a shaky breath. He lets himself be held. His tears leave stains on Sapnap's shirt. His hands move to cling to it, gripping the fabric, as if this too would be taken from him.

"I'm sorry for shouting," Dream says. Sapnap hums, rubbing circles into Dream's back. Dream's shoulders shake.

"I'm sorry," he says again. "I didn't mean it." The anger in him has left, leaving only hurt. "I wanted to be brave," Dream whines, and he knows he sounds like a child. Sapnap shifts, letting Dream push further into him. Sapnap presses his back against the wall, and they sit there as Sapnap rubs circles into his back.

"It's alright," Sapnap says. "I know you didn't mean it." Sapnap scoots slightly closer.

"I'm sorry for pushing," Sapnap says. "I know it's a lot." Dream takes another shaky breath, and Sapnap tightens his grip around him.

"The bravest thing you ever did was to love, and it made you kind," Sapnap says. Dream scoffs at

this, but it's half-hearted. He sighs.

"It hurts," Dream says.

"And it will keep hurting," Sapnap says, "until you figure it out."

"He called me, and I didn't answer his call," Dream says. His voice is rough from crying. "That was brave."

"No," Sapnap says. "It's not. Answering would be brave." He sighs, thinking of George and the way he would ignore Dream's texts for months. The way Dream would try to ask about him. He thinks back to when he had texted Dream that George would come, that he would film with them.

"Just answer him, will you?" Sapnap asks. He moves back so he can look Dream in the eyes. "I know it's hard, but if he calls again, answer him?"

"I love him," Dream says, ignoring the hanging question. "But he doesn't love me."

"He does," Sapnap says, and it feels like the truest thing he's ever said.

"I asked him," Dream says. "The night he left for the first time, I asked him if he loved me, and he said no." Dream takes another shaky breath. He gets quieter.

"I told him that I was in love with him last night, and he didn't answer. I know what that means." He sounds so broken that it makes Sapnap's heart ache in sympathy.

"Dream, ask me to tell you something true." Dream looks at him, and his eyes are red from crying.

"Tell me something true," Dream says.

"I think you two could work it out," Sapnap starts. "You could make it work."

Dream sighs. "I think it's been too long," he says. "Too much time has passed, and I don't know if things have changed in the right ways."

"Time changes everything," Sapnap agrees, "but sometimes, it also fixes things. You guys were so dependent on each other that it was almost unhealthy."

Dream closes his eyes at that statement. Knowing something and hearing it said out loud are different things entirely. He knows that Sapnap is right -- he and George were once co-dependent, almost to the point that it broke them. *It did break us*, Dream thought. *It was impossible for George to leave without hurting me. It was impossible for me to let him leave without hurting him.*

"It wasn't good," Dream agrees.

"No," Sapnap says. "But now you know how to be alone. You've learned, so now you can choose not to be." Dream is quiet for a bit, taking in Sapnap's words. When he speaks again, it's not so much a response as it is a statement. A simple truth he wants to voice.

"He knows I love him," Dream says. "He must know, I've told him so many times."

"He knows," Sapnap says, but it's more echoing what Dream says, rather than a reassurance. For the first time in a while, he's at a loss for words. There is nothing left he can say to Dream. After a moment, Dream untangles himself from Sapnap, moving to lean against the wall next to him. He adjusts his legs, bringing his knees up, and rests his head on them.

"I just need time," Dream says. "Then things will get better." He sighs. "I'll get over it."

Sapnap sighs. He glances over at Dream, who is staring at the wall. Sapnap sits there for a while, trying to keep Dream company. But after about 20 minutes of silence, he knows that company isn't really what Dream needs at the moment. He moves to get up. When he is standing, he turns to Dream.

"I'm heading out," he tells Dream. "I think you need space to think more." Dream doesn't speak, but he nods in acknowledgement, not lifting his gaze from the wall.

"I'm going to get my truck radio fixed," he says. "I've been meaning to do that for a while."

"It's almost seven," Dream says. His voice is slightly muffled. "It's kind of late."

"Then I'll go see if I can find a place that will do it, then drop the truck off in the morning," Sapnap says. Dream makes a sound of acknowledgement.

He glances down at Dream, who is staring at the wall, head resting on his knees. Sapnap reaches down and ruffles his hair before leaving the room.

"I want good things to happen," Sapnap says to no one.

Sapnap looks at his phone. His hand hovers over George's contact. *Fuck it*, he thinks. *If I want good things to happen, I have to make them happen.*

George speaks in metaphors. In physics, and science, and things that make sense. Colors, stars, and lines of code. It infuriates Sapnap to no end, but the things that George says are often stuck in his mind for days.

Maybe it's time to start saying what you actually mean, Sapnap thinks. *Maybe it's time to say everything you never had the chance to.* He takes a deep breath and makes the call.

Chapter End Notes

hello!!! updates go brrrr

thank you for all your sweet comments, they really make me smile!!! i really get instant serotonin when i see i have something new in my inbox :)

if you enjoyed, please let me know by leaving kudos or comments!! <3 they really motivate me to write :)

next chapter title: you need to try again. i'll try to have it up by this weekend :)

oh also, the total chapter number might be give or take a chapter or two :)

You Need to Try Again

Chapter Summary

"That's the thing," Sapnap says. "Do you get it?"

"What?" George asks.

"If things aren't sorted, you destroy it all," Sapnap says. "But what comes next?"

"What do you mean?" George asks.

"You destroy it all," Sapnap repeats. "But then you try again. You need to try again."

George is stunned into silence.

"Call him, will you?" Sapnap asks.

Chapter Notes

“Maybe the only way to really start over is to tear everything apart.” -- Shaun David Hutchinson, *We Are the Ants*

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Part of George wished that Dream had yelled at him. That would have been easier. Yelling he could deal with. He could yell back, and they could argue, and then one of them would apologize. It would have been easy -- a formula, a set of steps to follow. Easier than whatever the hell this was.

Dream sounded so heartbroken, but what really hurt was the resignation in his voice. He had accepted that this is the way that things needed to be. These things, combined with the honesty in his words, made George ache.

It's always been you. These words built him up. It was what George wanted to hear -- the affirmation that Dream still felt the same. He had wanted this for so long.

But it can't be anymore. Those words shattered everything. It was confirmation of something he already thought -- that no matter how much both of them wanted to be together, wanted to be with each other, it would never work.

George sat in the passenger seat in Dream's car, and he didn't know what to do. Dream refused to look at him, instead staring straight ahead. What George wants to do is try again. To make it work.

If George was a less logical person, he might have sat until Dream had looked back at him, then poured his heart out. There were so many things he could say. But there was nothing that he could say that Dream didn't know. He tried to think of something, anything to say that would mean that they wouldn't leave each other like this.

I want to make this work. I want you to stay. Dream, although a more emotional person than George, wasn't the type of person to drop everything in the hopes that this would work out. Years ago, George had asked Dream if there was anything that he could do to make Dream come with him.

In hindsight, it was a naive question. Dream had his career that he had been working to build for years. He was living his dream -- it had been cruel of George to ask. But George had thought that if he had asked, if he had wanted it enough, Dream would have stayed.

You told me I was everything, George thought. *That's why I asked you to stay with me.* Some part of George had known the answer to this. But he was still hurt when Dream refused him. *It wasn't fair to be hurt,* George thought, *it wasn't a fair question to ask, either. It was wrong. You can't force him to stay.* George bit the inside of his cheek, forcing the memories to the back of his mind, and tried to find something he could say in the present.

Please don't leave me like this. The desperation in that statement hurt his pride. *Pathetic,* George thought. There's a part of him that wants to sit and beg Dream to help work it out, but the more logical part of him knew that it would only hurt more if they figured out there was no way to work it out -- that no matter how badly they wanted each other, they could never have each other.

George had his own life now -- a job, his own apartment hours from their old place. He liked his job. He was coming up on two years working there, and because of his experience, he was expecting to be promoted within the next few months. George knew that he couldn't move back to be with Dream, and Dream couldn't move to be with him. That would be too much to ask. George swallowed, pushing the idea away.

I love you. George had said that yesterday, and so Dream knew. It wasn't like he had never said it before, but it was the first time he had said it in person. *Surely, that meant something,* George thought. He recalled Dream's words from when he had first picked him up: *it's different when you're right in front of me.* It was, and that's what made it difficult.

I was in love with you. To say this now would be cruel. Plus, Dream must have known. *You see right through me,* George thought. *You must know.* George's love was in the way that he felt the constant need to be close to Dream. How he melted in his touch. The past tense of it hurt to acknowledge, and also made it only half true. *To say I was in love with you is to imply that I am not anymore,* George reasoned to himself. *That's not true.*

The easy part was loving Dream. The hard part was everything that came after. *You told me you were in love with me last night,* George thinks. *That's the hard part.* Knowing that they both felt the same hurt George in a way he hadn't felt in a long time.

I am in love with you. George had almost said this. As soon as the thought came to him, he had almost said it. He could feel the words clawing up the back of his throat, the meaning of them sitting in his chest. But he couldn't. To say this, to be honest in this way, would be cruel. *I don't know if it would work out,* George had thought.

After a while of sitting in silence, George realized there was nothing he could say that wouldn't make it worse for both of them. So he gathers his things, lets himself take one last look at Dream, who still refuses to look at him, and leaves. As he walks into his apartment complex, he has to force himself to not look back.

George doesn't know what to do with himself, so he goes through the motions, and tries not to

think of Dream.

George doesn't think of Dream when he walks into his apartment, then puts his cat down. He watches as his cat walks towards a patch of sunlight, and smiles softly as she sits down in the warmth.

George doesn't think of Dream when he makes himself some instant noodles, but he does think of Sapnap. He adds some garlic salt to the noodles, trying to add more flavor, but ends up making them too salty. *Sapnap would judge me so much for managing to mess up instant noodles*, he thinks. They are very salty, but George eats them anyway.

George doesn't think of Dream when he showers, making the water as hot as possible, to the point where it was almost painful. By the time he's done, his skin is pink. He gets dressed and walks into the living room, stopping in his tracks when he sees the pile of clothes on the couch. He had forgotten that he never put his laundry away.

George sits on the couch and sighs, reaching over to start folding the clothes. That's when he notices: on the coffee table, a few of his shirts are already folded. *Dream folded some things for me*, he thought. In spite of himself, he can't help but recall how Dream had always agreed to fold the laundry if George did the dishes. The domesticity of the memory leaves a fond feeling in his chest, which is quickly overshadowed by sadness.

He tries to forget this, but when he turns to the pile of unfolded clothes, sitting on top is his old, neon green hoodie. Dream's hoodie. He stares at it for a minute, and thinks about Dream. How this old, oversized hoodie was once Dream's. How it was still his favorite, to this day. How no other jacket makes George feel as warm. It breaks him.

George picks up his phone, and he is calling Dream before he realizes what he is doing. *Just let me hear your voice*, he thinks. *I don't care what you say, just let me hear your voice. It's nice to hear your voice.*

Dream doesn't pick up. George bites his cheek, and is about to call again when he realizes: Dream must still be driving. He glances at the clock. It's been almost three hours since Dream dropped him off.

I don't even know what I would say to you, George reasons to himself. He sighs as he locks his phone. *Get out of my head.*

George puts his phone down, and folds his laundry. There are a lot of things to fold -- George had put off doing laundry for the longest time because he didn't like folding. But part of him is thankful for it now, for the distraction. If he were to think about Dream for too long, George knew he would start crying.

George takes his time, wincing when he finds a few of his work shirts are wrinkled from sitting in a pile for the weekend. He sets them aside, making a mental note to iron them. When he sets those aside, the only thing left to fold is the hoodie.

George thinks of how Dream had held this hoodie, how he walked in on him holding it up and smelling it. How warm he had felt at the sight. *Fuck it*, he thinks, and pulls it on. He picks up his phone and tries to call Dream again.

I know you probably won't pick up, George thinks, *but there's a chance you might*. It goes to voicemail. George doesn't bother leaving one. He stares at Dream's contact. Without thinking, he types a single text and sends it. He rereads it once his phone has delivered. *There's a chance*, he

thinks.

George sighs, putting his phone down, and getting up to put his clothes away.

He grabs his iron and ironing board from his closet, setting them up in his living room. His cat tries to fight the wire as he plugs it in.

"Kitty, don't eat that," George chastises, pulling the wire away. "No."

George irons his work shirts, keeping an eye out for his cat, every once in a while picking her up and moving her when she gets too close to the outlet. She meows at him, and somehow George feels as if she's sassing him.

"Don't make me lock you in my room while I do this," George says. He continues until he has no more shirts left to iron.

George unplugs the iron, pushing his cat away when she tries to eat the plug. He wraps the wire around it and places it on the board, away from where she can reach it.

"What are you going to do now?" George asks, slightly teasing. The cat doesn't respond, instead choosing to wander off in search of something more interesting.

George picks the shirts up, then goes to hang them in his closet. He then puts the board and the iron away.

He sits back on the couch, picks up his phone, and tries to call Dream again. As it rings, he glances towards the clock. *Dream should be back by now, or just getting home*, he thinks. His heart sinks when it goes to voicemail.

When his phone rings, he's hoping it's Dream. He's slightly disappointed that it's Sapnap, but doesn't hesitate to answer anyway.

"Hey," George says.

"Hey," Sapnap says. "Have you eaten today?"

"Yeah," George says. He thinks back to the overly salty instant noodles. *Good enough*, he thinks. He decides not to tell Sapnap about the noodles, to escape his criticism.

"Go drink some water," Sapnap says.

"I had water," George says.

"Drink more," Sapnap insists.

"Sapnap-"

"We're not continuing until you drink some water," Sapnap says firmly. George rolls his eyes, decides to oblige.

"Let me go get some," he says, getting up from his bed and walking to the kitchen. He fills a glass with tap water, and drinks the whole thing.

"I did it," George says.

"Promise?" Sarnap asks. George puts the glass in the sink, then walks over and sits on his couch. His cat, seeing him sit, jumps on the couch and makes herself home on his lap. George absent-mindedly pets her as he answers.

"Promise," George says. "What's up?"

"Dream," Sarnap says. George tenses at the name, but he can't say he's not expecting this.

"What about him?" George asks.

"He's a fucking wreck," Sarnap says. George is silent at this. After a moment, Sarnap continues. "What happened?"

"He told me a lot," George says. Sarnap is quiet, seemingly waiting for more. "I think a lot of it was things that he's wanted to say for a while." George is sure that Sarnap can hear the hurt in his tone.

"What did you tell him?" Sarnap asks.

"Nothing," George says. He closes his eyes, and thinks of Dream's words. *I don't know how to love like that anymore.* He takes a deep breath. *Recklessly. Trusting.* The truth of these words stung. At Sarnap's silence, he speaks again. "I didn't say anything."

"Why didn't you say anything?" Sarnap asks.

"The truth would have been cruel."

"Why?"

"It might have made him stay."

"What if he wanted to?"

"Then he would have."

Sarnap sighs. George can feel his pity through the phone, and it makes his cheeks burn.

"I want to talk about Dream," Sarnap says. George feels himself tense again, but fights the urge to avoid the conversation.

"I sent him a text," George says. "He didn't even open it."

"What did it say?" Sarnap asks. George swallows. When he thinks about what he had said, his cheeks go slightly red.

"Don't make me say it out loud," George says.

"Is it that bad?" Sarnap asks.

"It's not bad," George says. He takes a deep breath before continuing. "Just a lot." Sarnap hums.

"You guys need to talk," Sarnap says.

"I know," George says. He bites his cheek. "It's just hard. I don't think he wants to hear from me."

"He needs to hear from you," Sarnap says. "He basically poured his heart out to you, and maybe he

didn't need to do it in that way, but he needed to say all of that. Don't you have things you want to tell him too?"

George closes his eyes and lets out a shaky breath. *Of course*, he thinks.

"There's nothing I could say that would change anything," George says.

"You don't know that," Sapnap says.

"Even if there was, nothing can really change," George says. "Some things never change. I have my life, and he has his. I'll be here, and he'll be at our-" George flinches, correcting himself, "-his house." Sapnap is quiet for an uncomfortable amount of time. When he speaks again, his tone is steady.

"He wants you," Sapnap says. George's breath hitches at the statement. "And you want him." George doesn't respond. He hears Sapnap sigh.

"What's the best that would happen?" George says.

"Happy ending. You'll live happily ever after," Sapnap says. There is something sarcastically teasing in his tone, but also something painfully honest. Sapnap has always been optimistic.

"Maybe the happy ending is moving on," George says. He's more of a realist. "Maybe it's enough to just *live* ever after."

"You don't really think that," Sapnap says. "You could be happy together."

"This is enough," George says. He hears something rustle against the phone. "Sapnap?"

There's more rustling, then Sapnap speaks again. "Give me a sec, George." George puts his phone on speaker, then places it down on the coffee table. He pets his cat with both hands, and she purrs at the extra attention.

"I'm back," Sapnap says, after a while. "Sorry about that."

"Where are you?" George asks.

"I got my truck radio fixed," Sapnap explains. "I didn't think they'd be able to do it tonight, but apparently it was a simple fix." George hears the music through the speaker.

"That's good," George remarks. The music shuts off, and George assumes Sapnap has turned off the radio to speak.

"Back to Dream," Sapnap says. "He told me he's going to sell the house."

"What?" George asks. He thinks of the house -- there were so many memories in those walls. They had spent years of their lives there. He feels himself starting to get emotional, but pushes the feeling away.

"Yeah," Sapnap says. George swallows, forcing himself to push back the emotion and look at it logically.

"It makes sense," George says. "It's a big house for one person. Honestly, he probably should have moved on a long time ago."

"Moved on?" Sapnap echoes.

"Moved," George corrects himself. "I meant moved."

"I don't think you did," Sapnap says. George pointedly ignores this, scratching his cat behind her ears. She purrs.

"Look, George," Sapnap says. "Just call him. Force him to talk it out with you."

"I don't know Sapnap," George says. "I think that if it were meant to work out it would have worked out by now." He sighs, rubbing the back of his neck. "I mean, there were so many times where we were so close, but it never worked out."

He hears Sapnap sigh at this. For a while, he is silent. George fidgets, toying with the hem of his hoodie, waiting for a response. His cat pushes her face against his stomach, and George returns to petting her. After a few minutes, Sapnap speaks again.

"Do you remember when you stayed up with me to help me study for my midterm?" Sapnap asks. "You were explaining sorting algorithms to me. Like, the quickest way to sort a random set of numbers?"

"I remember," George says, uncertain. "That was so long ago." Sapnap had called him in a panic, telling him that he was definitely going to fail his midterm. He had been staring at the class material for hours, and he sounded like he was on the verge of tears.

George had stayed on call with him almost the whole night, explaining the material the best he could. It had been a while since he had touched the subject. But having someone else sitting there and helping him understand the material better had really helped Sapnap.

After hours of studying, to help Sapnap feel less stressed, he had started looking up the weirdest possible sorting algorithms, hoping to get a laugh.

"You made me feel a lot better," Sapnap says. "I was on the verge of a panic attack, that was a tough class."

"What's this got to do with anything?" George asks.

"Remember bogo sort?" George tried to recall which algorithm this was, but to no avail.

"Which one is that?" he asked.

"If it's not sorted, you randomize the order and check again," Sapnap explains. "Even if there is only one number in the wrong place, you have to just disregard it and randomize it." George hums, still uncertain where Sapnap is going with this.

"It's like if you throw a deck of cards on the floor, pick them up, and then check to see if they're in the order you want them to be," Sapnap continues. "If they're not, then you throw them down and try again."

"Efficient," George says. His voice is dripping with sarcasm. "Even if it's one card out of place, you destroy the order by randomizing, then try again."

"That's the thing," Sapnap says. "Do you get it?"

"What?" George asks.

"If things aren't sorted, you destroy it all," Sapnap says. "But what comes next?"

"What do you mean?" George asks.

"You destroy it all," Sapnap repeats. "But then you try again. You need to try again."

George is stunned into silence.

"Call him, will you?" Sapnap asks.

"He hasn't been picking up," George says.

"He will, if you keep calling," Sapnap answers. "Try again."

"Sapnap-"

"See you Georgie," Sapnap says. "Love you." Sapnap hangs up before George can respond.

You destroy it all, but then you try again.

George stares at his phone for a minute, before moving to Dream's contact. *One more time*, he thinks. *Let me talk to you one more time, and it will be enough.*

Chapter End Notes

hello!! i hope this chapter is alright -- i've reread it so many times my brain is turning to mush. i'm not too sure about it.

if you like it, please let me know by leaving kudos or a comment!! fun fact -- even if you're reading this without an ao3 account, you can still do both those things!! <3

thank you so much to everyone who's stuck with me this far :) also, if you want to recommend this fic on any other website, feel free to do so, just let me know!! <3

I Would Love You, Still, if You Would Let Me

Chapter Summary

"I was in love with you," he reads, "and I could still be." His voice hitches, slightly, but he pushes the feeling down to continue. "I would love you, still, if you would let me."

Dream is silent for an uncomfortable amount of time. George starts fidgeting, toying with the edge of his hoodie as he waits for a response. After a few minutes of silence, George speaks again.

"I'm in love with you," George says. "Will you let me be?" Dream is silent for a few seconds more, and for a moment, George panics, thinking that Dream hung up, leaving him. "Dream?" Dream must hear the fear in his voice, because he responds almost immediately.

"Of course," Dream says, and it's breathy, as if he's breathing out the words. "Of course, Georgie."

Chapter Notes

Pylades: I'll take care of you.

Orestes: It's rotten work.

Pylades: Not to me. Not if it's you."

-- Anne Carson, Euripides

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream doesn't pick up.

George listens to it ring, and as it goes to voicemail, he feels his heart sink.

Please, he thinks as he dials again. He stares at his bedroom wall, trying to find shapes in the crayon scribbles as he listens to it ring.

Dream doesn't pick up.

"Fuck," George says. He puts his phone down, and lets himself fall back on his bed. He closes his eyes, and takes a deep breath. *Maybe it's enough to just love you*, he thinks. *I don't have to have you, but let me love you.*

George opens his eyes and stares at the glow-in-the-dark stars on his ceiling, willing himself to stay calm. He can feel his heart pounding. He picks up his phone once more.

He holds up his phone and glances at the time. It's nearly 10 PM. He opens his text conversation with Dream. His last text sits there, as if it were mocking him. George feels his heart in his throat. Dream hadn't read his text.

George feels his eyes stinging. He tries to take a deep breath, but it's shaky.

One more time, he thinks as he dials again. George knows that if he tries to speak, it might be incoherent. His voice would be shaky, and Dream would definitely be able to tell that he's crying. *I don't care*, he reasons to himself.

Please pick up, he thinks. George's cheeks are wet now. The ringing of his phone seems obnoxious at this point. *Please, please, please*.

It rings again. *Please*. George feels his breath catch. *I don't care if you don't say anything, just listen*, he thinks. *I probably sound like a wreck, but I need to talk to you. Please*.

It rings again, and George sobs. "Please," he says out loud to no one. "Please pick up." He sits up, wiping his cheeks and trying to catch his breath.

"Hey."

Dream's voice shocks him. Part of him didn't think that he would be able to hear it again. George freezes.

"Hello?" Dream sounds like he's just woken up. George takes a few deep breaths, trying to compose himself.

"Hi," George says. He winces when he realizes how he must sound. There's more silence. After a minute, George speaks again.

"Hey Dream," George says. He sounds a little better, but he's sure Dream can hear the emotion in his voice. "I didn't think you would pick up."

"I'm sorry, I fell asleep," Dream says. There's a beat. "Didn't sleep too well last night." His voice is hollow. There's no emotion in it.

George thinks of last night, how they had been tangled together. How it felt to be able to feel Dream breathing, to be able to reach over and physically have him in his arms. The last good night. The thought made him feel sick. He bites his cheek so hard he tastes blood, but he can't stop the sob that he is sure Dream can hear. He tries to play it off as a cough, but he can't.

George sobs again, and he knows that Dream can hear it, but he can't bring himself to stop. It's too much at once -- hearing Dream, the hollow in his voice, and the physical distance between them when last night there was none. It hurt.

He hears something rustling against the phone, like Dream is sitting up.

"George?"

There's so much concern in Dream's tone, a stark contrast from the hollow prior. George tries to take a deep breath, compose himself, but it's shaky, and he can't stop the tears. After a moment, Dream speaks again.

"Are you crying?" he asks.

"S-sorry," George says. He flinches at the way his voice hitches. He takes another shaky breath. "Give me a minute," he says. He wipes the tears off of his cheek with the back of his hand. "Please don't leave." George can hear the desperation in his own voice, and it makes him feel pathetic.

"Hey," Dream says, and he sounds so soft. "It's okay."

"It's not," George says. "I'm sorry." His voice breaks. "I don't mean to be like this." He sniffles, and rubs his eyes again. "Please don't leave. Please." It had taken so many calls for Dream to pick up, and part of George was convinced that he would leave again.

George doesn't cry often. He can't remember the last time that he cried, honestly. But this was too much.

"Hey," Dream says. The softness in his voice makes George want to cry more. "I'm here."

"You're not," George says. He tries to catch his breath, but he can't. His chest feels too tight. "You're not here," he chokes out. His voice sounds so strained, and he's sure Dream can hear him falling apart.

"Hey," Dream says. "Deep breaths, Georgie." George bites his cheek at the nickname. He tries to catch his breath again, and manages to take a deep, albeit shaky, breath.

"Where are you?" Dream asks. George is slightly confused by the question, but answers anyway.

"In my room," George answers. He closes his eyes and tries to stop shaking.

"What does your room look like?" Dream asks. His voice is so gentle, and it hurts. "I haven't seen it."

George opens his eyes, and glances at the wall.

"There's crayon on the wall," George says. "I think the last person who lived here had kids. It's only on the lower half." Another shaky breath.

"What else?" Dream urges. George glances around.

"I have stars on my ceiling," he says, looking up. "They glow."

"Glow?"

"They glow in the dark," George says. "The light is off right now." He glances around the room once more. "I have a fan," he says. "It has clouds painted on it."

"Clouds?"

"Yeah," George responds. "Fluffy ones." He knows what Dream is doing -- trying to distract him, keep him grounded. George wipes his tears using his shirt, then continues. "I'm cold," he says.

"Put on a sweater," Dream says. George reaches down to his floor -- he had taken off his hoodie and discarded it there earlier. He pulls it on.

"I did," George says. He uses the sleeves of the hoodie to rub his eyes again. "It's your old one," he remarks, without thinking. He freezes. Dream is quiet for a moment, and George panics. "I'm sorry, is that okay?"

"Yeah," Dream says, softly. "That's alright, Georgie."

"I'm sorry," George says. "I can take it off if you want." He feels himself start to panic again. "I don't mean to-"

"George," Dream says. "It's okay, I promise." George hears him take a breath. "I like keeping you warm."

A quiet falls between them. George runs his hand through his hair. He bites his cheek, then summons all the bravery he can into his next question.

"Did you mean it?" he asks. George hates the way he sounds so small, so pathetic. He swallows, pushing the feeling to the bottom of his stomach.

"Mean what?" Dream asks. There's a certain softness in his voice, a softness George hasn't ever heard Dream use with anyone else. In spite of himself, George feels his cheeks grow warm.

"The things you said. In your car." For a moment, Dream doesn't respond, and George is terrified that he's going to leave. He's about to say something - beg Dream to stay, tell him not to leave - when Dream speaks.

"Yes," Dream says. George knows this, but it still stings. "I did."

"That hurts," he says.

"George-"

"You said you loved me," George interrupts. "You said that it's always me. That it's always been me."

"I did," Dream says. His tone is uncertain. "That's true."

"But that you don't anymore," George says. Dream's words - *I don't know how to love like that anymore* - sting.

"That's not what I meant," Dream says.

"You said-" George takes a shaky breath. "You said you didn't know how anymore. That love was reckless. That you didn't know how to trust me anymore."

"I didn't mean it like that," Dream says.

"Then how did you mean it?"

Dream sighs. George can picture him now: sitting up in his bed, running one hand through his hair.

"Dream?" he asks.

"I love you," Dream says. "I love you so much." George feels his heart warm at this, but there's a certain feeling of distrust he can't shake.

"You left me," George says. He can't help the bitterness in his words.

"You left me first," Dream says. George hears him take a breath. "I'm sorry, that's not fair."

"It's okay," George says. "It wasn't fair of me either."

"I wanted to be brave, but I was cruel," Dream says. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have left you like that."

But I needed to say all of that."

"I know," George says. There's a beat. "You're the bravest person I know."

"How could you say that?" Dream asks. "I'm definitely not."

This is how to be brave: be in love with a beautiful boy, and don't fight the urge to be honest.

"You are to me," George says. *Fuck it*, he thinks. He's not going to leave anything else unsaid.

"You're everything to me."

Dream is silent at this.

"You weren't answering," George says. "I didn't think you were ever going to again."

"It's hard," Dream says. "I'm sorry. I didn't know if I wanted to hear what you had to say."

"You didn't open my text," George says. It's not accusatory, just a statement of fact.

"Sorry," Dream says. "I was upset. I can read it now." George takes a breath, and feels a sudden surge of bravery. It's exhilarating.

"Wait," George says. "I want to say it to you. Read it to you." George moves his phone, and fumbles a bit. He puts Dream on speaker, then opens their text messages. His text is there, still unopened.

George takes a breath before reading.

"I was in love with you," he reads, "and I could still be." His voice hitches, slightly, but he pushes the feeling down to continue. "I would love you, still, if you would let me."

Dream is silent for an uncomfortable amount of time. George starts fidgeting, toying with the edge of his hoodie as he waits for a response. After a few minutes of silence, George speaks again.

"I'm in love with you," George says. "Will you let me be?" Dream is silent for a few seconds more, and for a moment, George panics, thinking that Dream hung up, leaving him. "Dream?" Dream must hear the fear in his voice, because he responds almost immediately.

"Of course," Dream says, and it's breathy, as if he's breathing out the words. "Of course, Georgie."

"I loved you," George says, the relief in his voice apparent. "I love you so much. I can't handle the thought of you not being in my life." He laughs, and his chest feels light. "Sapnap told me he thinks that we could make it work, this time."

"He told me the same thing," Dream says. George can hear his smile. "That we've learned how to be alone, so now we can choose not to be."

"When did he get so smart?" George asks.

"When did we get so dumb?" It's not that funny, but George laughs anyways. Dream chuckles with him, and it makes his heart flutter. An apprehensive silence falls between them. George is the one who breaks it.

"Do you want to try?" George asks. His voice is anxious, and he feels his heart pound. "To make it work?"

"It's hard," Dream says. George can hear the smile in his voice. "But you're worth it." The honesty in his voice makes George feel tender. He lets the truth of Dream's words sit, for a moment, but then he's hit with a new wave of apprehension.

"What if it doesn't work?" George asks. He feels so small, asking this. His voice is quiet, and he lets out a shaky breath.

"It's you, and it's me," Dream says. "And I know you, and you know me better than anyone. We'll make it work."

"It's scary. I don't want to lose you completely." In spite of himself, he can feel his eyes get teary once more. "Sorry, can I have a minute?"

"Don't cry," Dream says. He sounds so soft. "I don't want you to cry when I'm not there to help," he says.

"I'm trying," he says. He hiccups, then lets out a sob that he tries to choke back. "Fuck, I'm sorry, I'm trying. I can stop, just give me a minute." George feels both incredibly happy and sad at the same time, and it makes him feel so stupid.

"Georgie," Dream says. "Hey, it's okay. It's okay to cry. I didn't mean that you shouldn't." George bites the inside of his cheek. "You don't have to go. I'm not going anywhere." George lets himself trust this, that Dream won't leave him. He wipes his eyes once more, taking deep breaths.

"Can you talk to me? Just for a little," George asks. He puts his phone down on his bed. "I wanna hear your voice."

"Of course," Dream says. George brings his knees up, curling into himself.

"You know, you're really cute when you sleep," Dream says. "You look so sad, sometimes, and I don't think you mean to. It's like, you get a faraway look in your eyes, and you bite the inside of your cheek."

George feels himself flush.

"When you're sleeping, you look so calm," Dream says. "You curl into me, and I get to hold you, and it's warm. I like keeping you warm," he continues. "You're wearing my hoodie now, and that's keeping you warm."

George honest-to-god giggles, and he feels himself melt at how sweet Dream is being. "You're cheesy," he says.

"I don't think that's the right word," Dream responds. There's something teasing in his tone. "I'm protective, I think. I want to hold you so close that no one can take you away." George flushes. There's so much honesty there; Dream's words are gentle and genuine at the same time, and it makes George feel warm from the inside out. He lets himself enjoy the feeling, as Dream continues.

"The next time I see you, I'm going to do that. You can wear one of my hoodies, a newer one. We can order sushi and watch a movie. You can fall asleep on me, I'll keep you warm and be there when you wake up."

"You don't like sushi," George points out.

"No, but you do," Dream says. "I'll pick what we eat the time after," he says.

"How do you do that?" George asks. His tone is soft.

"Do what?" he asks.

"Say things like that so easily," he says. "You're always so good at making me feel warm inside."

"Well, I've thought about this a lot before," Dream says. "I think about you a lot." George smiles at this. He's no longer tearing up, and there is a pleasant warmth in his stomach.

"Keep talking," George says. "I like your voice." Dream hums, as if he's thinking of what to say next.

Suddenly, George remembers something.

"Sapnap told me you were selling the house?"

"Yeah," Dream says. "I am." George feels nostalgic -- there are a lot of memories there. But there's a vague sense of acceptance. *Time to move on*, he thinks.

"Sorry," Dream says, interrupting George's thoughts. "I should have told you. It's just too big -- I can't justify staying here. One person with so many empty rooms is kind of depressing."

"It's alright," George says. "You don't need my permission." There's a beat, before Dream continues.

"Sapnap's moving back to Texas," Dream says.

"Yeah," George says.

"I'm planning on letting him take some of the furniture from here. It's good timing, there's a lot of stuff here that I don't need." George thinks of their old house, all of the fully furnished rooms that were empty. *It must have been lonely*, he thinks. *All those empty rooms*. "He says that when he's fully moved in, we should go visit him."

"If we do, you're going to have to drive," George says. "I'll feed you snacks."

"You should get your license Georgie," Dream says. "That way, you could visit me."

George laughs, then shakes his head. "Maybe," he says. "You'll always come if I ask you too, though." Dream doesn't deny this, and George revels in the laugh he hears.

"I'm taking a break from YouTube as well," Dream says. George hums. "As soon as our video is posted, I'm going to make an announcement."

"How long?" he asks.

"I'm not too sure yet," Dream says. "I'm not giving myself a set time. As long as I need. I haven't taken time off in a really long time."

"Are you going back to it?" George asks.

"I'm not quitting. I'm setting it aside. I'll come back to it," Dream says. He ponders for a moment, then smiles. "When you love something, you come back to it."

George feels the truth of these words in his throat. "Yeah," he says. "I know what you mean."

"It's going to be tough," Dream says. He sighs, and George can tell that he's stressed. "I need to figure out buyers and stuff, but also go house hunting. I don't even really have a set idea of where I want to be."

"That sounds like a lot," George says.

"Yeah," Dream says. "It's a lot at once." George swallows. He thinks of something, then.

Here's the thing about ideas. Sometimes, one takes hold of you, and you can't get it out of your head. It's such a lovely idea that George has thought of, and it scares him, but he decides to be brave. *The best that can happen*, he thinks, *is happy ever after*.

"Hey Dream?" he asks.

"Yeah?" Dream responds.

George takes a deep breath. "Do you want to move in with me?"

There's a poignant silence.

"I mean, it's not much, but it's mine," George says, feeling suddenly embarrassed. He thinks of their old house, how large it is compared to his current apartment. "Well, I mean it's not mine, I still rent, and it's a bit of a mess-" He glances up to the wall, to the worn crayon marks from the last tenant who lived there.

"George," Dream says. George ignores this, continuing to ramble.

"It would probably be less stressful if you had somewhere to go," he says.

"George-"

"I know that you didn't want to come with me last time, but I want to make this work." He feels his breath catch at the honesty in his words.

"George, I'd love to," Dream says.

"Really?"

"Of course," Dream says. "I'd love to." George laughs, and it's a mixture of relief and joy.

"I'm sorry, it's not a good place to be for filming," George remarks. "It's a one bedroom, and the walls are kind of thin."

"Then I can stay, while we find a new place," Dream says. "I think that's a good enough reason for a really long break."

"We?" George asks. There's something so hopeful in his tone, and he feels like he is floating.

"We," Dream affirms. "We could look for someplace to buy together. It won't be as big as the last place, but we could make it work. A forever home." He pauses, for a moment. "If you want that, of course." George feels his heart swell at the prospect.

"Yeah," he says, feeling breathless. "I'd like that."

"Okay," Dream says. "Then that's what we will do." George feels so content at this. But there's one more thing that he wants to ask. *Make it official*, he thinks. *Don't just leave it up to assumption*. He

takes a deep breath, summoning all the bravery within him, then speaks.

"Dream," George says. "Do you want to be mine?"

"I am. You have me," Dream says. "All of me." The matter-of-factness in Dream's tone makes George feel warm. Dream's so genuine that it makes George nervous.

"I mean," George stutters, for a moment, and he hates how bashful he feels. "Like, do you want to like, be my-" he struggles to find the words. He feels himself flush when he hears Dream wheeze.

"Dream, don't make fun of me," George says, fully embarrassed. He hears Dream laugh harder.

"You're so cute," Dream says, his tone teasing. "Are you blushing right now?"

"Shut up," George whines. "This is embarrassing." His face is fully red, but he can't help the smile that comes to his face.

"You slept in my arms last night, and the night before. You wore my clothes, and you're wearing my hoodie right now," Dream says. "You offered to let me move in with you, and I just said that I wanted to buy a house with you -- I literally said forever home." Dream laughs again. "And you're blushing over the thought of asking me to be your boyfriend?"

"Stop it," George says. He laughs, and his cheeks hurt from smiling. "Stop teasing me."

"Oh *baby*," Dream says. George's heart flutters at the nickname. "You're so cute when I tease you."

"You didn't even answer," George says, trying to divert the conversation.

"You didn't finish the question," Dream teases.

"Dream," George whines. "Don't tease." George pouts.

"Of course I'll be yours," Dream says. He laughs. "You're so cute when you blush."

"You can't even see me," George says. His cheeks are still red. He places his hand on his cheek, and it's warm.

"I don't have to," Dream responds. "I can hear it in your voice."

"Stop teasing," George says. He can't help but smile in spite of himself.

"You can tease me as much as you want when I ask you to marry me," Dream says. George feels his heart stop at those words.

"What was that?" he asks.

"Nothing," Dream says, and George can almost see his shit-eating grin. "Nothing at all."

"You're an idiot," George says.

"Your idiot," Dream says. George smiles. He yawns, and suddenly is aware of how late it has become.

"It's getting late, and I have work tomorrow," George says. He checks the time, and winces -- he probably won't be able to get more than five hours of sleep. "I shouldn't miss it, I took Monday off last week." Images of Sapnap flash in his mind. George thinks of smoking in the back of his truck, having late-night/early-morning conversations. He smiles at the thought. It seems so long ago,

now.

"That's alright Georgie," Dream says. "Call me after work?"

"Yeah," George says, "I will." He can already feel himself looking forward to it. "When can I see you again?"

"Next weekend, I'll drive down and pick you up," Dream says. "And every weekend after that."

"That's a lot of gas money," George points out.

"I don't care," Dream says.

"Dream--"

"If you want to split the cost, we can alternate weekends," Dream says. "It will be for two months, three months, at most. Then I move to you, and then we look for a new place."

We look for a new place. George smiles, and feels a warmth in his chest. It's nice.

"Sapnap will be there too," Dream says. "Until we both move."

"Alright," George agrees. "I'll see you then."

"I'll see you then," Dream echoes. George is sure he can hear the smile in Dream's voice.

"Goodnight George," he says. "I love you."

"I love you too," George says. "Sleep well."

He hangs up, and for the first time in a while, he falls asleep smiling.

Chapter End Notes

hey hey hey :)

hope you like the chapter!! <3 if you do, let me know by leaving a comment or kudos. comments really make my day -- genuinely, i get my serotonin from those inbox notifications.

the final chapter should be up in a few days -- it's something of an epilogue.

thank you all for sticking with me through this!!

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

A goodbye.

Chapter Notes

"You can come home to me, when you're ready. I left the gate unlocked for you." --
Cavetown, Smoke Signals

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's warm. Sapnap closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

He is sitting on the floor in his room, which is completely empty. All of the furniture had been moved out a few hours prior. The sun is shining through the blinds, creating striped shadows on the wall. The light itself is pleasant, and makes the room look golden.

Sapnap opens his eyes and stares at the light hitting the wall. He raises his hand, and stares at the way the shadows curl around it. He flexes his fingers, watching his shadow as he does so. It's pretty -- a delicate silhouette. Sapnap sighs and puts his hand down.

If he thinks enough, he can almost imagine all of the furniture back. There, in that corner, was his desk -- he had spent so many hours there, just sitting and editing, answering emails, even streaming. More recently, he had spent some late nights there, apartment hunting, sending emails, and finalizing his new place.

It was a lovely apartment -- big windows, high ceilings. The furniture that he couldn't fit in the back of his truck, as well as some kitchenware and clothes, sat in boxes on the floor of his new place. The movers had confirmed that they had unloaded everything yesterday -- his parents had helped. They had been delighted to hear that he was moving back permanently.

Sapnap glances towards his closet. At some point, it had been filled to the brim with exclusive Sapnap merch. It was empty now -- the closet doors sit open, and Sappnap glances at the empty clothing bar, and thinks of all of his mismatched hangers. For the past year, he had been alternating between the same five shirts that he could fit in his backpack. In the past few months he had been staying with Dream, he had accumulated a few more clothes, which he greatly appreciated. More clothes to wear meant less time spent doing laundry.

Sapnap looks away from the closet and stares at the wall across from him. His bed had been against that wall -- there had been many late-night conversations there. Both George and Dream, at different points, had come to him for advice, and sat there with him. Sappnap thinks of the last time this happened -- when Dream had come into his room, the first night that George had been back. He smiles at the memory.

Sapnap is interrupted from his thoughts when George walks in the room.

"Hey, Dream's back," George says.

"I'll be right down," Sapnap says, continuing to stare at the wall. He hears George walk over, but doesn't look up at him.

"This room looks so much bigger without the furniture," Sapnap says.

"Yeah, it does," George remarks. His voice echoes on the walls. George moves to sit next to Sapnap, who doesn't turn to look at him.

"Isn't it weird to think that this is the last time I'll be in here?" Sapnap says. George hummed in agreement. "Once I walk out that door, there's no reason for me to come back in."

"It's weird," George says. "How did you feel when you first moved out?"

"Excited," Sapnap says. "I think part of it was that I had trips to half a dozen countries planned out. Somewhere to be." He smiles at the memory. "Also, this was always my room whenever I visited, so it was never really like I moved out."

"You haven't really lived here in years," George points out.

"True, but home is where the heart is," Sapnap says.

"That's cheesy," George says, teasingly. Sapnap lets out a chuckle.

"You know what I mean," Sapnap says. "I think I told you, when I first got here, that coming back here felt like coming home."

"Yeah, I remember," George says. "That feels like so long ago."

"It was only a few months ago," Sapnap says.

"Well, how do you feel right now?" George asks. "Do you feel like you're leaving your home?"

"Weird. Not sad, but not happy either. Sort of in-between," Sapnap says. His tone is thoughtful. "I think content is a good word." Sapnap rests his head on George's shoulder. "It's not the house, it's the people that were in it."

George reaches over and intertwines their fingers. Sapnap squeezes his hand.

"Will you miss it?" he asks. George ponders the question for a moment before he answers.

"I don't think miss is the right word. I'll miss you, but I can always call you," George says. "It's a nice thought, you being in the same place. Like, I can wake up and know what time it is for you."

Sapnap hums in agreement. They sit in quiet, for a moment, staring at the wall together. It's nice.

George yawns, rubbing his eyes.

"Didn't sleep well last night?" Sapnap asks.

"Didn't sleep last night, basically," George says.

"Oh, Dream kept you up all night?" Sapnap gives him a suggestive look, which makes George roll his eyes.

"We were talking," George says. "Kind of about this, actually. It's weird."

"Yeah, but it's a good kind of weird," Sapnap says. "I feel like I've done what I need to."

"Time to move on," George says, echoing the sentiment.

"You mean move?" Sapnap says. George smiles.

"No," George says. There's a certain fondness in his voice that makes Sapnap feel warm. "I mean move on." Sapnap smiles.

They're interrupted when Dream walks in.

"You guys were taking so long," Dream says. "The pizza will get cold." Sapnap lifts his head off of George's shoulder and looks up at Dream. George reaches a hand out, and Dream takes it and helps him up.

"Pizza isn't really a breakfast food," Sapnap says.

"It's almost noon," Dream points out.

"First meal of the day is breakfast, I don't make the rules," Sapnap replies.

"Fine, then me and George will eat it ourselves," Dream says. Sapnap laughs, then shakes his head. Dream holds his hand out. Sapnap takes it and lets Dream help him up.

"Come on," Dream says, giving Sapnap a smile. "It's time to go."

Sapnap takes one last look at the room. When George and Dream walk out, he follows them, and shuts the door.

"What are you putting in the fridge?" Sapnap asks. Dream stood in the kitchen, placing a paper bag into the fridge.

"Wine. My mom picked it out," Dream explains. "It's an old superstition, I think -- leaving a bottle for the next person. I think it's for luck."

"I like that," George says. "It's like a thank you." Dream shuts the fridge door.

"Yeah, something like that," Dream agrees. "It's a sweet gesture." Dream walks over to where George and Sapnap are sitting on the dining room floor, and takes a seat between them. George hands him a slice of pizza on a paper plate, and Dream takes it gratefully.

On the day that they had moved in, they had ordered pizza from the nearest pizza place for dinner. They hadn't unpacked the dining room or kitchen stuff yet, so they sat on the floor to eat, surrounded by boxes they had yet to unpack. There was a clip of it in the vlog that they had reacted to -- they had all looked so young, the excitement of moving in with each other clear on their faces.

It seemed only fitting that their last meal in the house be the same as their first.

"It's weird to think about all the things that we've done in this house," Sapnap says. He puts down his paper plate and leans back.

"Yeah," George agrees.

"I'll miss it," Dream says. He looks around the room, then back at Sapnap and George. "That doesn't mean I want to stay, though," he says. "This feels right."

"It does," Sapnap says. "The end of an era."

"The start of an era," George says, correcting him. Sapnap looks at him, and George offers a soft smile. "There's so much life left to be lived." The thoughtfulness in this statement makes Sapnap feel warm.

"You're right Georgie," Sapnap says, smiling.

"Yeah," Dream says. He looks over at the two of them, and can't help the fondness in his voice. "You're right." A content quiet falls upon them as they eat. After a bit, Dream sits up, and digs through his pocket for something. He pulls out his car keys.

"Oh by the way, here George," Dream says, handing George the car keys. "It's your turn to drive on the way back." George makes a face.

"Do I have to?" he asks. Dream rolls his eyes.

"I drove on the way here, and to pick up the pizza," Dream says. George pouts. "You can drive back."

"He got his license, but still never wants to drive," Sapnap remarks. George reaches over and shoves him, making Sapnap laugh.

"It's boring to drive that long," George says. "I'd rather just sleep."

"If you think about it, I've made that drive so many times that it should have been your turn these past ten times," Dream points out. "I'm being nice."

George sighs. "Fine," he says. "You win." He puts the keys in his pocket, then moves to stand up. "I'm going to the bathroom."

"Don't fall in!" Sapnap calls out after him. George flips Sapnap off, making him laugh.

"He's happy," Sapnap says, once George is out of sight.

"He is," Dream agrees. He thinks back to when he first saw George again -- how he noticed the bags under his eyes, how pale he looked, the faraway sort of sadness in his stare. When comparing that to George now - energetic, witty, and touchy - it made Dream feel tender. "We all are."

Sapnap looks at Dream. "Are you going to cry when I leave?" he asks. His tone is teasing, but there's a truth within the statement. Dream meets his gaze.

"Not this time," Dream says. The words he had said to Sapnap, months ago - *I cried when you left* - seem so far away. He smiles. "I know where you're going, and I know when I'll see you again."

Sapnap gives Dream a soft smile, then reaches over and squeezes his shoulder. "Yeah," he says. "You do."

"I'll miss you though," Dream says. "It's been nice living with you."

"It was nice while it lasted," Sapnap agrees.

"Yeah, that's a good way to put it," Dream says. "Nice while it lasted."

George walks back, and Sapnap makes a teasing remark, asking if he had washed his hands. George rolls his eyes, but chuckles at Sapnap's tone. Dream looks at them and smiles.

Yeah, he thinks. Nice while it lasted.

"I'll throw this away," Sapnap says, putting their used plates in the empty pizza box, then getting up.

"Alright," George says. He watches as Sapnap walks away. Unexpectedly, Dream leans over and puts an arm around him, quickly pulling him closer and making him yelp.

"Dream!" George says. Dream chuckles into his hair.

"What?" Dream asks, feigning innocence. "You were too far away."

"You're so annoying," George says. He's smiling.

"But you love me anyways," Dream says. George shakes his head, but his cheeks are pink.

"Unfortunately," he says. George leans into Dream's chest. "It's weird that we'll never be back here," George says, quietly.

"Yeah," Dream agrees. "But I like the way that things are right now."

"Really?" George asks. Dream presses his cheek against the top of George's head.

"Really," Dream says. Sapnap walks in. He smiles, then shakes his head at the two of them.

"Come on dorks," he says. "We should get going."

Dream and George untangle themselves, then stand up. Sapnap walks out to the front steps, then turns and looks back. George follows him. Dream lingers in the doorway, looking back at the empty house. He lets himself remember the years he spent living here, letting the warmth of the memories consume him. He smiles.

"You ready?" George asks. Dream smiles at him, then takes one last look inside.

"Yeah," Dream says. He turns and shuts the door, then looks at George again. "Ready as I'll ever be."

"Oh, this is for you," Sapnap says. They stood outside in the driveway. Sapnap reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a small box. He hands it to George.

"For me?" George asks, raising an eyebrow.

"It's for both of you, really," Sapnap explains. George opens the box, and pulls out a key.

"A key?" Dream asks.

"My apartment key," Sapnap confirms. "Just in case you ever find yourself in Texas. I had a copy made."

"I like the keychain," George says. The key was attached to a small, rubber, panda keychain.

"I thought it was fitting," Sarnap says. Dream chuckles.

"Thanks Pandas," Dream says. Sarnap smiles at the old nickname. "We'll come to you, next time."

In hindsight, Sarnap had always been the one to come to them, driving for hours at a time. The thought of Sarnap having his own place was a pleasant one. Somewhere he would be, reliably. Where they could come to him if they needed to.

"In a month?" Sarnap asks. They had made plans to visit: Dream and George would drive to Texas and stay with Sarnap for two weeks.

"In a month," Dream affirms.

"When we find a place, we'll send you the key," George says. Sarnap looks at George, and leans over to put an arm around him. George smiles and leans into the touch.

Later on, none of them would be able to recall exactly what their last words to each other were -- a quiet lull fell upon them, and eventually, they needed to go.

They had smiled, hugged, and wished each other safe journeys. Sarnap promised to call them once he had arrived in Texas. Then Sarnap got into his truck and drove in one direction, Dream and George got into their car and drove the other. There was nothing more to say.

Chapter End Notes

hello!

first of all, i just wanted to say thank you to everyone who's been following along with this story, and a special shoutout to all of the people who have been here from the beginning and have commented on every chapter, been excited for every update :) it really means a lot to me -- this is the first thing i've written for a really long time, and it makes me so glad to see that there are people who appreciate it <3

second of all, i made a twitter!! i might not be active all too much, but all of my interactions in the comment section of this fic have been lovely, and i want to try to keep that :) i genuinely love this so much, it really feels like a small community :)

follow me @authorialintent (that's a one not an L). <3

it might be a while before i write anything again, but if you want to be notified when i do, you can go to my ao3 profile and subscribe to my user :)

and as always, if you liked this, please let me know by leaving a comment or kudos letting me know what you think. if this is your first time reading because you only read complete fics -- welcome! leave me a comment if you liked it :) if you've just reread the whole thing -- hello! thank you so much! let me know what you liked about it :)

i love you all, until next time!

End Notes

This is my first work! If you like it please let me know :)

twitter: @authorialintent (that's a one not an L)

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